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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

How optimistic are you that 2012 will be better for the CNMI economy than 2011?

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INSIDE



Deadly Snowstorm

A late-autumn snowstorm jeopardizes thousands of holiday motorists' travel plans.

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AP's Choice

Lady Gaga is voted Entertainer of the Year by members of The Associated Press.

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Healthcare corporation board approves \$80K for Babauta. **PAGE 2**
Applications for Fund consultancy 'non-responsive' **PAGE 8**

IN FIRST EEOC JURY TRIAL IN CNMI

Owners of Saipan Grand Hotel prevail

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The owners of Saipan Grand Hotel have prevailed in the sexual harassment lawsuit filed against them by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of a band singer who alleged that a then restaurant manager of the hotel made sexual advances on her.

See OWNERS on Page 4



Attorneys Steven Pixley and Vincent Seman are all smiles as they emerge from the courtroom of the U.S. District Court for the NMI yesterday morning. The jury rendered a verdict favorable to Saipan Grand Hotel's owners Asia Pacific Hotels Inc. and Tan Holdings Corp. in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's sexual harassment lawsuit filed on behalf of a band singer.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Reyes now voting 'yes' on casino bill but other senators still mum



Reyes

»Froilan says 'at least 5 senators' now support casino on Saipan

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan) said yesterday he now supports the legalization of casino gaming on Saipan, but only because he wants

to help prolong the life of the NMI Retirement Fund which he says is in "intensive care."

Reyes is the first of seven senators who killed a Saipan casino bill last year to go on record about his change of heart.

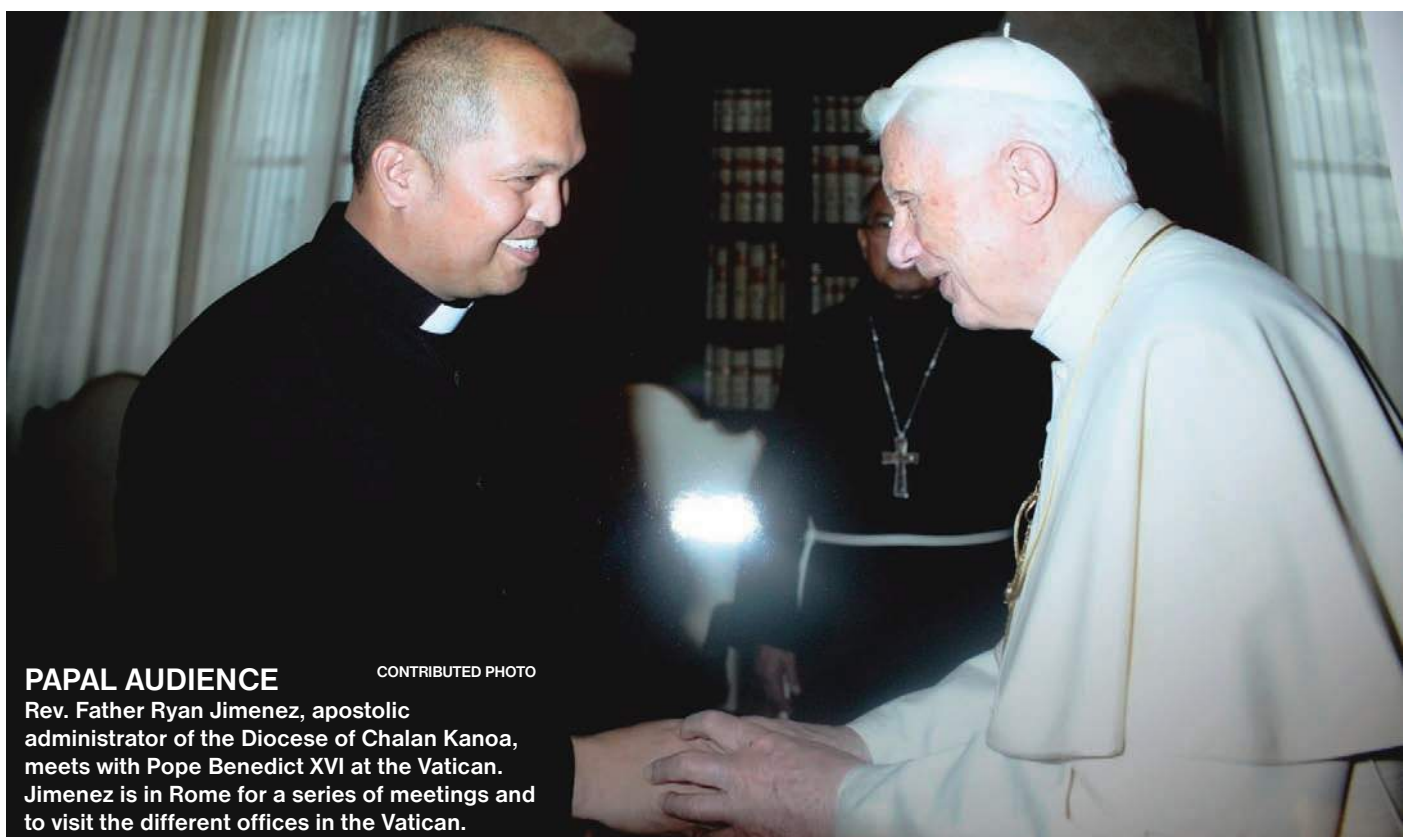
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Senate to pass at least 6 Fund bills next week

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Senate is poised to pass next week at least six of 23 pending measures impacting the NMI Retirement Fund, including an initiative that allows a 99-year public land lease for golf courses, a House bill allowing withdrawal of retirement contributions by rollover to the defined contribution plan, and an initiative allocating 25 percent of government revenues to pay for employer

See SENATE on Page 4



PAPAL AUDIENCE

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rev. Father Ryan Jimenez, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, meets with Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican. Jimenez is in Rome for a series of meetings and to visit the different offices in the Vatican.

In observance of the holidays, the *Saipan Tribune* will not be published on Dec. 26, 2011 and Jan. 2, 2012.



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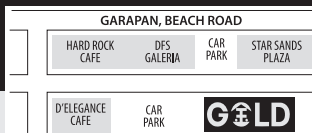


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\$80K approved for Babauta

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The newly established Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. board has approved an \$80,000 annual salary for its chief executive officer, Juan N. Babauta, who been working for the corporation since on Oct. 1.

Board chair Joaquin Torres said, however, that a formal contract with Babauta has yet to be executed. That means Babauta has yet to officially agree to the contract's provisions. He has not been collecting any salary since he started working for the corporation two months ago.

Former Public Health secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez used to get \$60,000 per annum.

Babauta is a retiree who receives an annual pension of more than \$100,000, sources said. Under the law, he is only allowed to double-dip—to receive both his salary



Babauta

from a government position and his pension—for 60 days. After that, he will have to choose whether to accept the salary or waive his pension.

This issue, in addition to being busy with several problems at the Commonwealth Health Center, may be one of the reasons why Babauta has not yet signed his contract, Torres said.

He believes that some clarification relating to the law that created the healthcare corporation is also an important factor

in making the decision.

Torres declined to further comment on the matter when pressed, but assured that the board will support and respect whatever decision Babauta makes.

The CEO was in a meeting when contacted yesterday for comments.

Torres earlier told *Saipan Tribune* that Babauta's contract is for four years and that "salary will not be an issue" for Babauta because of his "great desire" to turn around the hospital's situation.

In an interview with Babauta at the recent Saipan Chamber of Commerce meeting, he confirmed that Villagomez was officially out of the corporation effective Oct. 24. He also disclosed that the corporation had tried to ask Villagomez to stay but he had refused.

The corporation chief also disclosed that the hospital has collectibles of up to \$52 million of which only a quarter may be actually collected because of the statute of limitations.

IN CASE VS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Fund welcomes intervention bid of autonomous agencies

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The NMI Retirement Fund's board welcomes the efforts of some government agencies to intervene in the ongoing lawsuit between the pension agency and the central government.

Board chair Sixto K. Igisomar said that both the Commonwealth Ports Authority and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. filed last week motions to intervene in the case, which involves the Fund's attempt to collect over \$231 million in unpaid employer contributions owed by the central government.

Igisomar said these agencies' intervention will be better for the Fund because it prevents the filing of separate cases that are in fact inter-related to the ongoing lawsuit between the Fund and the government.

"For me, it's a lot better for the Fund and the trustees because we don't need to fight separate cases. If they have cases and they think it's related [to the existing lawsuit], go ahead and come in and we'll settle it right there," said Igisomar on Friday.

He believes the motions may be related to these agencies' unpaid employer contributions and the new employer contribution rate of 61 percent beginning this fiscal year.

Fund officials earlier disclosed that the central government and other agencies have not been contributing at this actuarially determined rate since

the new rates became effective on Oct. 1 and are now deficient in their employer contributions.

Igisomar said agencies may also want to intervene in the case to "protect" their assets, which are all considered part of government resources and property that the Fund wants to take over as collateral for the unpaid contributions.

He also cited the previous motion to intervene filed by the Commonwealth Retirees Association, which was granted by the court. "Like CRA, we should...allow them to come in and participate in the decision making. ...Like the retirees, they also wanted to come in because they want their voices heard, too," said Igisomar.

Besides CPA and CUC, *Saipan Tribune* learned that two other autonomous agencies—the Commonwealth Development Authority and the Northern Marianas Housing Corp.—also filed Monday motions to intervene in the case.

During the board's deliberation Friday, legal counsel Viola Alepuyo reported that the Fund will not oppose these motions. A hearing on the case was held Monday; the court will make its decision before the end of this month.

The court had ruled in 2009 that the government owes the Fund over \$231 million in unpaid employer contributions. This amount keeps growing as the government continues to be delinquent in its contributions.

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Insurance firm directed to pay worker's unpaid wage

Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman yesterday issued a ruling in a Labor case filed in 2005 by a nonresident worker who failed to collect unpaid wages from her employer.

Wiseman affirmed the Department of Labor Secretary's order that found an insurance com-

pany liable to pay the worker, Lucila G. Aquino, \$4,673.84 in unpaid wages that her employer, Ruth P. Reyes, failed to pay.

Wiseman ruled that there was nothing improper about the decision of the Labor administrative hearing office, which heard Aquino's case and the bonding case.

He said that regardless of the award granted by the administrative hearing office, petitioner Royal Crown Insurance Corp. remained liable up to the bond limits.

According to Labor and court records, Aquino was a non-resident worker employed by

Reyes. In 2003, Royal Crown issued a bond securing the performance of Reyes relating to her employment of Aquino.

In 2005, Aquino filed a labor complaint against Reyes. Royal Crown was not a party to the labor case.

The Labor administrative hear-

ing office issued an order on March 7, 2008, awarding \$4,673.84 in unpaid wages to Aquino.

Reyes failed to pay the award, prompting Labor to issue a notice instructing Royal Crown to either pay the award up to the bond limits or to file written objections.

In January 2010, the administrative hearing office ordered Royal Crown to pay under the bond. The terms of the bond

provided for three months' pay of \$1,586.

In February 2010, Royal Crown filed an appeal with the Labor secretary, then a petition for judicial review in the Superior Court on April 11, 2010.

Two days later, April 14, 2010, the Labor secretary issued an order affirming the administrative hearing office's order. **(Ferdie de la Torre)**

New laws help Fund, increase fine for parking in handicapped space

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial signed four laws yesterday, including one that seeks to prolong the life of the NMI Retirement Fund by providing annuitants an option to continue their CNMI government life insurance coverage under the same group terms and conditions as that offered to government employees, provided that annuitants' coverage is not reduced by more than 30 percent.

Under Public Law 17-66, the premium cost will be divided between the Fund and the annuitant in the same manner as the premium is divided between the CNMI government and government employees.

The bill that became Public Law 17-66 was House Bill 17-77, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 2, authored by House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan).

The measure says the Retirement Fund needs fiscal reforms to ensure its long-term fiscal solvency in order to meet its

mandate of providing pension for all members.

"This amendment will be just one of many cost-saving measures that will provide the necessary step to save the CNMI's pension program," Cabrera said in his bill.

The governor also signed three other bills into laws.

Public Law 17-65 increases the penalties for parking in a space reserved for persons with disabilities. Fitial said members of the community having physical disabilities face significant challenges.

"The Legislature has wisely addressed an avoidable challenge—persons taking a parking space reserved for persons with disabilities," the governor said.

Fitial also said increasing fines is both a revenue enhancement and a statement of sound public policy affirming the protection afforded

these community members.

Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan) was the author of the legislation, HB 17-36, that became Public Law 17-65.

Any business or privately owned facility that does not have a designated accessible parking spaces within 90 days of the law's effective date faces a civil fine of \$100 per day until the required parking spaces are designated.

The penalty for parking in a space reserved for people with dis-

abilities is \$150 for the first violation and \$300 for the second violation. For subsequent violations, the penalty is \$300 to \$1,000.

Under the new law, a special account for the Department of Public Safety will be established. Twenty-five percent of the fines collected will be deposited in this account, to be used for the celebration of the annual Police Week, honoring fallen police officers and firefighters.

Another account shall also

be established for the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. Twenty-five percent of the fines collected will be deposited into this account solely for public education and outreach.

The remaining 50 percent of funds collected from fines will be deposited into the general fund.

The governor also signed Public Law 17-63, renaming the Garapan/Chinatown Head Start Center the "Joaquina M. Rabauliman Head Start Center" in recognition of Rabauliman's

services to the CNMI Head Start Program and her contributions to the community. A dedication ceremony was held a few months ago. Palacios also authored the bill, HB 17-178 that became Public Law 17-63.

Fitial also signed House floor leader George Camacho's (Ind-Saipan) HB 17-72 into Public Law 17-64, clarifying the definition of certain taxable commodities. These include the definition of "cigarette," "soft drink," and "tobacco, tobacco substitute or chewable tobacco product."

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Aoi Restaurant 11:00-14:00

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\$30.00 Dinner only 18:00-22:00 Poolside
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Chamber opposes \$1 fee for scuba dive shops

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is opposing a bill that would require scuba dive shop operators and marine sport concessionaries to impose a \$1 surcharge per customer who avails of their services.

The CNMI's largest business organization is also opposed to a bill requiring employers to provide resident workers the same benefits given to alien workers.

The Chamber also reiterated its call for the abolition of Article 12 of the NMI Constitution, which restricts landownership

to persons of Northern Marianas descent, in its comment on two separate initiatives.

Douglas Brennan, Chamber president, sent four separate letters to the Legislature commenting on four pieces of legislation.

Among these bills is House Bill 17-75, HS1, SD1, requiring dive shop operators and marine sport concessionaries to pay a \$1 surcharge per customer. A portion of the funds collected will go toward buying a decompression chamber.

Brennan said the Chamber is generally against increased costs of doing business in the CNMI. He said passage of this bill will create

additional hardship on a specific area of commerce and trade.

He said the Northern Marianas Dive Operators Association had already raised thousands of dollars for the purchase of a decompression chamber several years ago, but there's been no purchase made "and those funds disappeared into the CNMI general fund."

"Although it has no bearing on the merits of the acquisition of the decompression chamber itself, the NMDOA is justifiably upset that the Legislature would ask them to fund again, through a surcharge that harms their very operations," Brennan

said in a letter to House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan).

Brennan, general manager for Microl Corp., also said the Chamber opposes HB 17-225 or the Resident Workers Fair Compensation Act of 2011.

He said a better alternative would be to repeal the mandatory requirement for employers to shoulder the medical costs of foreign workers.

Richard Pierce, executive director of the Chamber, said last night that if there were enough trained and qualified locals to take positions that will now be held by the new H-1B visa holders, "we wouldn't need any

H1-B persons in the CNMI."

"You cannot substitute a prevailing wage rate for H1-B visa holders for those existing CNMI minimum wage earners unless they are qualified to hold those positions. And if they are, and they are being forced to accept CNMI minimum wage pay, then they should visit EEOC. That's the way it works," he said.

Brennan, in commenting on House Legislative Initiative 17-3, said that simply amending the blood quantum levels to "at least a certain degree" of indigenous blood does not address the primary problem with the current restrictions under Article 12.

"With the abolishment of Article 12, SCC believes the cur-

rent economic challenges where financial institutions are unable to extend loans and further financial assistance would be alleviated, and investment opportunities would be enhanced through Article 12's absolute abolishment," he said.

Brennan made a similar comment on Senate Legislative Initiative 17-9, extending private land leases from 55 years to 99 years.

"Investment in the CNMI, through land acquisition as securing that investment, is further enhanced by abolishing Article 12. SCC believes SLI 17-9 will only potentially decrease the economic impact of Article 12 as a deterrent to investment in the CNMI," he added.

OWNERS

From Page 1

The eight jurors said "no" to the special verdict form's question: Did plaintiff EEOC prove by a preponderance of the evidence that defendants subjected [the singer] to a sexually abusive or hostile work environment?

With their "no" answer, the jurors were not required to answer the remaining questions in the special verdict form.

It is the first EEOC jury trial in the CNMI as employers who were previously sued had opted to settle.

U.S. District Court for the NMI courtroom deputy Tina Matsunaga read the verdict yesterday at 9:35am. The jurors started deliberating Friday and resumed their deliberations on Monday and yesterday. They deliberated for an hour yesterday before reaching a unanimous verdict.

After the verdict was read, a beaming Steven Pixley, counsel for Tan Holdings Corp. and Asia Pacific Hotels Inc., shook hands with his co-counsel, Vincent J. Seman.

The singer, Michelle Bunonan, who was seated between EEOC attorneys Derek Li and

Nancy Griffiths, kept her head down, staring at the prosecution's table.

EEOC had alleged that Asia Pacific Hotels and Tan Holdings allowed Bunonan to be subjected to sexual harassment that was severe enough to create a hostile, abusive work environment.

EEOC alleged that Tomas Alegre, the then hotel's restaurant manager, subjected Bunonan to unwelcome touching inside her hotel room in the early morning of Jan. 2, 2008.

In his deposition, Alegre, who is now in the Philippines, said that he had a consensual

relationship with Bunonan. Alegre disclosed, among other things, that the singer, who was drunk at the time, invited him to her room.

Pixley later told reporters that they are exceedingly pleased with the verdict.

In a separate statement, Pixley said it was a hard fought trial, but at the end of the day the jury found that the complaining witness was not exposed to a hostile work environment.

"The simple truth is that my clients have expended a considerable amount of human resources, time, and treasure

ensuring compliance with all applicable laws including those addressing sexual harassment and discrimination issues. Tan Holdings and Asia Pacific Hotels are good corporate citizens," he said. *(See complete statement on Page 11)*

Saipan Grand Hotel general manager Ed Cho said they are happy with the outcome, expressing belief that the company did everything right in how it handled the issue.

EEOC trial attorney Li told reporters that they intend to appeal.

Li said they will review the records to see what issues or

decisions were wrong and then they will decide what particular point will be the basis of their appeal.

Li, however, thanked the jurors for "taking the time to carefully consider the evidence of this case."

"The message that we want to leave to the people of Saipan is that no employer is above the law. And for a meritorious case, the EEOC will protect the rights of all employees—residents of Saipan and nonresidents of Saipan," Li said.

Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona presided over the trial that began on Dec. 12.

REYES

From Page 1

Sen. Luis Crisostimo (Ind-Saipan) was absent during a voting last year on Tinian, while Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota) abstained.

Taimanao, now head of a special Senate committee reviewing bills impacting the Fund, declined to comment on the casino issue.

Rep. Froilan Tenorio (Cov-

Saipan), author of the first Saipan casino bill that the Senate killed last year, separately said yesterday that he believes there are "at least five senators" now willing to support legalizing casinos on Saipan as a means to extend the Fund's life, restore the 40-hour workweek for government employees, and generate additional revenues for critical public services.

A new House casino bill is now with the Senate Committee on Federal Relations and

Independent Agencies chaired by Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian).

Hofschneider said yesterday that the committee has yet to meet to discuss the bill. He said he's keeping an open mind, and declined to comment further.

Reyes said that besides helping the Fund, his support for Saipan casino operations also stems from his intention to bring back the 80-hour work biweekly among government employees.

He said he supports the bills

and initiatives that the Senate is planning to act on next week but described many of them as "band-aid solutions." What the Fund needs is a permanent fix, he added.

"I don't mind saying that in the past, I was very adamant about opposing [Saipan] casinos but now that the Retirement Fund is in ICU, we can no longer maintain a stubborn attitude because this is for the welfare of the three islands, not just one island," he said.

be vested in the Retirement Fund, the initiative says.

The second initiative, SLI 17-14, SD1, also authored by Manglona, authorizes the transfer of funds from the Marianas Public Land Trust to the Retirement Fund.

The amendment to this initiative requires the transfer of all MPLT interests and dividends (minus administration expenses) to the Fund every three months so long as the Fund has an unfunded liability. This amendment shall apply beginning the fiscal year after the loan to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is paid in full pursuant to Public Law 17-2.

The third initiative, SLI 17-15, SD1, also by the Senate president, sets aside 25 percent of revenues to pay the government's employer contribution to the Fund each fiscal year. The original initiative sets aside \$25 million for such purpose every fiscal year.

Under this initiative, the governor shall first set aside no less than 25 percent of revenues to pay the government employer

Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan) said he has not decided on the casino bill yet, while other senators didn't want to comment on it.

Reyes also said that while he now supports casino operations on Saipan, the pending House casino bill needs to be amended before he could actually support its passage.

He said among his proposals is to change the casino bill to ensure that a bigger chunk of funding is given to the Fund.

Tenorio, meanwhile, said he would like to see the casino bill also amended to ensure that the \$10 million casino license fee goes to the restoration of the 40-hour workweek for government employees and the revival of the earned income tax credit, which he said he started when he was governor.

He said if he would have his way, he would also like to have the bill amended to help pay a portion of land claims.

SENATE

From Page 1

contributions to the pension agency.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota) separately confirmed yesterday an agreement to move these six pieces of legislation forward on Tuesday. These include the Senate-amended versions of Senate Legislative Initiatives 17-13, 17-14 and 17-15, Senate Bills 17-94 and 17-99, and House Bill 17-226.

Taimanao said two other bills could be added to the Senate list, depending on the House of Representatives' action on these bills in today's session.

Manglona postponed today's Senate session to Tuesday, wherein they plan to take up only Retirement Fund-related bills. Another Senate session will be scheduled the following day to tackle other measures.

Agreement on the six amended bills and initiatives came after another meeting yesterday

morning between the Senate Special Committee on the NMI Retirement Fund headed by Taimanao, Fund officials, and the Commonwealth Retirees Association.

Sen. Ralph Torres (R-Saipan) said he supports Fund-related bills "as long as the Fund and the retirees association see them as helping the Fund."

Lawmakers and the Fital administration have recently been aggressive in moving legislation that would help prolong the Fund's lifespan, which was earlier projected to last only three years.

Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan) also said yesterday that he supports bills that will help the pension agency, although he believes some of them are "band-aid solutions" and not "permanent solutions."

Initiatives

SLI 17-13, SS1, authored by the Senate president, transfers to the Fund the disposition and management decisions on public land leases of golf courses.

The amendment to this

initiative mainly involves allowing the Fund to lease the public land golf courses for 99 years for \$50 million or for an amount determined by two certified independent appraisals, whichever is greater.

Upon the Fund's approval, the Department of Public Lands is supposed to execute a 99-year lease pursuant to the terms determined by the Fund.

"[DPL] shall not transfer an interest in any public land golf course without the approval of the Legislature in a joint session," the initiative says.

Under this amended initiative, DPL shall hold fee simple title to all existing public land golf course leases.

These are the Coral Ocean Point Golf Course, LaoLao Bay Golf Course, Rota Resort Golf Course, Marianas Country Club Golf Course, and all other golf courses to which a current land lease is in effect with the CNMI government.

However, the management and disposition decisions—including the authority to lease, extend or renew a lease—shall

contribution to the Fund each fiscal year until paid in full and all liabilities of the defined benefit plan pensions are satisfied.

House bill

The Senate is also offering an amendment to a House bill allowing non-retired Fund members to withdraw their contributions from the pension agency without severance of employment or penalties.

House Bill 17-226, House Draft 1, authored by Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) will be amended by the Senate to allow the rollover of the contributions to the defined contribution plan, or DCP. The Senate amendment also authorizes hardship loans within the DCP.

It also amends the rebate offset amount to provide an alternative funding mechanism to pay for the rollovers. This provision is taken from a similar proposal from House minority leader Joseph Deleon Guerrero (R-Saipan).

Senate bills

The Senate is also poised to

pass Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider's (R-Tinian) SB 17-94, SD2, repealing Public Law 17-51, which allows NMI Retirement Fund beneficiaries to sue on behalf of the pension program if the board refuses to bring such legal action. The amendment includes suspending the Fund's procurement restrictions for 90 days.

A similar repealer bill is set for House action today.

This is one of the bills that Taimanao said could be added on to the Senate list for consideration next week.

The Senate is also set to pass SB 17-99, transferring the administrative functions and liability of the Government Life and Health Insurance Program to the Department of Finance by amending the NMI Retirement Fund Act.

At least 10 of 23 pending bills and initiatives under review by the Senate special committee will either add or reduce costs for the Fund ranging from \$60,000 to over \$100 million. Other pieces of legislation have yet to be fully reviewed.

Senate panel endorses Barrineau as new PUC commissioner

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate's Public Utilities Transportation Commission has endorsed the appointment of William Ronald Barrineau to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission.

Saipan Tribune learned that PUTC chair Rep. Stanley Torres (R-Saipan) recommended to the Fitial administration Barrineau's

immediate appointment as the commission will shut down after Jan. 30, 2012, if no new members are confirmed. The commission currently only has one member, Viola Alepuyo.

In his letter to Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, Torres described Barrineau as an asset to the commission. He said Barrineau has been a resident of the Commonwealth since 1975 and had served with distinction as the

executive director and member of the board of directors for the NMI Council for the Humanities for the past several years.

Prior to these experiences, Barrineau also served as a federal grants administrator and CIP manager and had taught both at the Northern Marianas College and the Marianas High School. He also served in the military.

The commission's second member, Joaquin Manglona, quit

in November, leaving Alepuyo as the sole member of the commission. The law allows the commission to function for only 60 days if it has only one commissioner, so unless a new member is confirmed soon, the commission will have to shut down after Jan. 30. Alepuyo's term at the PUC is until March 2012.

Press secretary Angel Demapan said yesterday that the governor has yet to make any

new appointments to the commission. He said some names are being reviewed for possible appointments soon.

"The governor is aware that the commission will be unable to function after Jan. 30. Thus, he is expected to complete his review of individuals he is considering and make an appointment shortly," Demapan said.

He did not respond to questions if Barrineau will be

among the new appointees to the commission.

Commissioners are appointed by the governor and requires confirmation by the Senate.

CPUC has a scheduled business meeting in January where it is expected to decide on several matters, including the rate hike petitions for electric base rate, water and wastewater charges, and abolition of the levelized energy adjustment clause model.

US govt, Rota Coconut Village Hotel eye early settlement

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_deltorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. government and the Rota Coconut Village Hotel are in the middle of talks to settle a lawsuit against the hotel for alleged federal tax liabilities amounting to \$148,347.65.

With settlement talks ongoing, both parties, through their respective lawyers, have agreed to a court order to extend the time for the hotel to file its answer to the lawsuit to Feb. 29, 2012.

NMTI to host free seminar on becoming a skilled tradesman

The Northern Marianas Trades Institute will be holding a free seminar at its campus on how to become a skilled tradesman. The seminar will be on Dec. 27, 2011, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm.

All current students, high school students, prospective students, government workers, retirees, and any other individuals, male and female, are encouraged to attend. Learn how easy and quickly you can become a certified tradesman. Financial assistance is available for those who qualify.

At the seminar, attending students will talk about their

In their agreement, U.S. Department of Justice's Tax Division trial attorney Lauren M. Castaldi and Rota Coconut Village Hotel's counsel, Gregory J. Koebel, disclosed that they discussed the possibility of an early settlement and agreed to a 60-day extension of deadline for the hotel's response to the suit.

Castaldi and Koebel said they are in the process of obtaining information and reviewing documents as part of their settlement negotiations.

The lawyers said it is anticipated that the U.S. government will need to send someone to Rota to personally inspect the hotel.

In the lawsuit filed in September, Castaldi stated that

timely notice of federal income tax assessments was given and timely demand for payment was made of upon the Rota Coconut Village Hotel.

Despite the notice and demand for payment of the assessments,

Castaldi said that the hotel "has neglected, refused, or failed to pay such assessments."

As of Sept. 26, 2011, he said, there remains due and owing to the U.S. the sum of \$148,347.65, plus interest and

other statutory additions.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona recused herself from the case. Manglona said that persons within the third degree of relationship to her spouse, associate justice John A. Manglona, are minority shareholders of the hotel.



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Samsung GALAXY Tab 10.1

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The Galaxy Tab 10.1 is a complete overhaul compared to the original 7 inch Galaxy Tab. The new 10.1 offers a larger 10.1 inch Hi-res touch screen display, pre-loaded with Android 3.1 Honeycomb OS, and claims to be the thinnest tablet in the world!

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INCLUDES 6 PRELOADED GAMES!

This gaming phone sports dedicated gaming controls on a slide-out pad, a large screen, and a 2nd-generation Snapdragon processor. Other key features include 5-megapixel camera, front-facing camera, 3.5mm audio jack, mobile Wi-Fi hotspot, full browser with Adobe Flash, memory card slot, DLNA wireless media streaming.

CASIO G'zOne COMMANDO™

\$299+

This Android 2.2 FROYO CDMA smartphone is notable for its rugged, waterproof design. Other key features include compass, thermometer, pedometer, a high-resolution touch display, and extra-loud speaker. Rounding out the features are a 5-megapixel camera, Wi-Fi with mobile hotspot, EVDO 3G data, and memory card slot.

SANYO ZIO™

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INCLUDES 3GB LOAD

This Android smartphone is notable for its large, high-resolution display and 3G EVDO data. Other features include 3-megapixel camera, Wi-Fi, accelerometer, 3.5mm headphone jack, and memory card slot.

Samsung Showcase

\$199+

Part of Samsung's Galaxy S series, this high-end Android smartphone sports a huge 4-inch OLED display, fast 1 GHz processor, and 5-megapixel camera with LED flash and video capture. Other features include Bluetooth 2.0, Wi-Fi with DLNA streaming, and a 3.5mm audio jack.

htc EVO™ 3D

\$299+

This update to the EVO 4G adds 3D screen and camera, including video, plus a faster 3rd-generation dual-core Snapdragon processor. Other features include Android 2.3, HTC's Sense interface, a huge, high-resolution display, and HD video output to TV. Other features include Wi-Fi, memory card slot, and 3.5mm audio jack. The EVO 3D is surely a phone that will blow away the competition!

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Life in Motion

Students take turns spreading cheer among the *man'amko*

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tuesday was a day for the *man'amko* to bond with students as two schools on Saipan visited the island's elderly at the Aging Center in time for Christmas.

Students of San Vicente Elementary School visited the clients at the center in the morning, bringing gifts of various local fruits like bananas and papaya, which the *man'amko* shared among themselves. The students also handed out handmade cards.

After SVES' visit, 11 juniors

Eleven members of the Jamsesh group from Saipan Southern High School sing Christmas carols in various languages to the *man'amko* at the Aging Center on Tuesday.

CLARISSA V. DAVID



perfect their act.

"Performing for them [*man'amko*] was great. I hope they have a great Christmas and they enjoy the holiday season," said Santos, 17.

Gerlyn Libunao, 18, said that seeing the *man'amko* enjoying the performance was "heart-warming." "It felt good entertaining them," the senior told *Saipan Tribune*.

Ada-Hocog, for her part, said, "I believe the highlight of the performance was having the *man'amko* singing with the students."

Elena Villanueva, secretary for the Saipan Seniors Advisory Council, expressed her appreciation for the donated fruits and the Christmas caroling.

"It was beautiful. We're happy. It reminded me of my family, some of whom are in the Philippines," said Villanueva.

When asked for her Christmas wish and message, Villanueva said, "I am hoping that I can visit my family again. I also wish for the *man'amko* to love and share with one another."

Hermana Faisao, 67, said she sang along with the SSHS students. "I like the caroling and I like the fruits and the cards. I feel happy that these kids come to the center and give to the *man'amko*. I hope they come back next year."

and seniors from Saipan Southern High School arrived before lunch to sing to the senior citizens.

Accompanied by conductor Rose Ada-Hocog, the students are members of Saipan Southern High's Jamsesh group, which was just formed last month. The group sang Christmas carols in various languages, with a ukulele accompaniment to boot.

Ivan Santos, one of the ukulele players, said it took them about two weeks of practice to

Reprogramming of \$1.4M CIP money OK'd

The four-member Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation approved yesterday the reprogramming of more than \$1.4 million in remaining capital improvement projects money for road paving and historic site preservation projects on Tinian.

By a vote of 4-0, the delegation adopted Resolution 17-8, Draft 1 during a session yesterday afternoon.

Under the resolution, \$1,413,342 in CIP money will be reprogrammed for the fol-

lowing projects: \$1 million for Marpo Heights II road improvement; \$313,242 for Carolinas Heights road improvements; and \$100,000 for the preservation and protection of the House of Taga Park as an offered amendment by Sen. Henry San Nicolas (Cov-Tinian).

The House of Taga is a historical site containing invaluable ancient latte stones, skeletal remains of indigenous people, and other ancient artifacts. (*Haidee V. Eugenio*)

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COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE CNMI ARRA STATE LEAD LOCATED ON THE THIRD (3RD) FLOOR OF THE MARIANAS BUSINESS PLAZA OFFICE #315, SUSUPE OR REQUESTED VIA E-MAIL TO cnmi_tinting@recovery.gov.mp.

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‘Call us if you need a ride home’

The Department of Public Safety is stepping up its efforts against drunk and drugged driving this holiday season. DPS Commissioner Ray Mafnas said they have already begun their 3D campaign, urging community members to “think twice” if they are going to drink and drive.

“It’s extremely important that we observe this law. It could be very costly to the public... We are

asking everyone to support the national campaign against drug and drunk driving,” said Mafnas.

He also urged the community not to let family and friends drive drunk.

“If you are in a situation where you feel you will be intoxicated, we will be providing a number to call and we will come and pick up the individual requesting for assistance. That’s

the best we can do,” he said.

Lucy Omar, 3D Committee designated driver, said that several businesses and individuals will be donating the use of their vehicles to support this campaign. They are Islander Rent-A-Car, Microl Toyota, Alamo, Hertz, and Leilany Castro.

The 3D hotline number is 483-RIDE (7433). *(Clarissa David)*

Clothing store exclusively for men opens

A new clothing store is opening shop on island.

J. Anthony Clothiers, located across the Unity Dress Shop or north of *Saipan Tribune* office in Garapan, will open its doors at 4:30pm today.

The island’s first men’s-only clothing boutique, J. Anthony Clothiers is locally owned and carries an array of quality and affordable clothing and acces-

sories for big and husky men.

Carol Santos, owner and manager of J. Anthony Clothiers, said she has had for quite some time the idea to open a clothing store that caters to the everyday clothing needs of the island’s menfolk.

“I am excited that what was once an idea is now a reality. I am more excited knowing that the men on island now have a place they can go to directly to

shop for clothes,” said Santos.

According to Santos, clothing options for big and husky men in the CNMI is very limited.

“J. Anthony’s offers quality clothing for the typical island male at affordable prices—for every occasion,” said Santos.

The first 100 customers in today’s grand opening will receive a free bag from J. Anthony Clothiers. *(Clarissa V. David)*

Hyatt supports Toys for Tots campaign

Hyatt Regency Saipan and Karidat have teamed up for this year’s “Toys for Tots” toy drive, which will benefit the children under Karidat’s shelter.

On Dec. 1, 2011, Hyatt announced the “Toys for Tots” toy drive and was overwhelmingly supported by its associates. All the gifts to be presented during this first annual event are all from Hyatt employees’ generosity. During last year’s toy drive, Hyatt and its associates exemplified the true essence

of the holiday season and gave 60 children Christmas presents. This season of giving, the toy drive will bring joy to around 70 children, ranging in age from a few months up to 17 years old.

Ranging from big to small, simple to extravagant, the company is assured that these gifts will help send this season’s true message: giving.

Today, Dec. 21, employees will present the collected gifts to Karidat during an event at Hyatt Regency Saipan’s lobby

at 2pm.

“It is our team’s goal to thrive within the community we are a part of and when you bring joy these children, we are certainly one step closer to achieving that,” said Hyatt general manager Nick Nishikawa.

Under the Hyatt Thrive initiative, associates are empowered to make meaningful contributions in their local communities. To learn more about Hyatt Corporate Responsibility programs, visit hyattthrive.com. *(Hyatt)*

SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – NMI CHAPTER



PRESENTS

HR: Navigating through Change
Thursday, December 22, 2011
Charley’s Cabaret
Pacific Islands Club Saipan

Conference Agenda

7:30 – 8:30 am

Registration & Refreshments

8:30 – 8:40 am

Opening Remarks

Polly DLG. Masga
President, SHRM NMI Chapter
Human Resources Manager, Pacific Islands Club Saipan

8:40 – 9:00 am

Ice Breaker #1

9:00 – 10:00 am

USERRA: Knowing is half the battle

Employees who serve their country as well as your company are protected by the Uniformed Services Employment and Rights Act (USERRA). This session will help you understand what USERRA is and what actions you must take as an employer.

Speaker: David J. Sablan
State Chair, Guam-CNMI State Committee
Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve
U.S. Department of Defense

10:00 – 10:45 am

OJT leads to a J-O-B

Statistics show that the unemployment rate in the CNMI has increased over the last couple of years. The Workforce Investment Agency offers an On-The-Job (OJT) training program and offers to subsidize the cost for this training. Learn how your company can take advantage of this opportunity!

Speaker: Edith Deleon Guerrero, Executive Director
Workforce Investment Agency

10:45 – 11:00 am

15 Minute Break

11:00 – 12:00 pm

E-mail Liability Traps

Did you ever feel like you shouldn’t have sent that last e-mail? Learn what the most common traps are and how a simple e-mail can actually make you liable. This session will bring awareness to the common e-mail traps and how you can skillfully and legally write and respond to e-mails.

Speaker: Michael Ernest, Esq.

12:00 – 1:15 pm

LUNCH

12:30 pm – 12:45 pm

Lunch Briefing: Climb Higher Initiative

The Northern Marianas College will be sharing information about its Climb Higher Initiative, which is aimed at expanding access and opportunities for working individuals to earn their degree. In addition to discussing convenient class schedules, financial aid opportunities will be presented.

Speaker: Frankie Elipico
Joan Torres
Northern Marianas College

1:15 – 1:30 pm

Ice Breaker #2

1:30 – 2:30 pm

All my visas and petitions are done. What’s next?

So you’ve processed all your H, L, E visas and processed your CW petitions. Now what? Find out what areas you should be mindful of as an employer as we embark on this new journey with U.S. Immigration.

Speaker: Bruce Mailman & Maya Kara
Mailman & Kara, LLC

2:30 – 3:00 pm

Summary & Closing Remarks

Debra T. Camacho
Vice President / 2012 President Elect, SHRM NMI Chapter
Human Resources Manager, Pacific Trading Company

This is a Full-Day Conference:

Date: Thursday, December 22, 2011

Venue: Pacific Islands Club – Charley’s Cabaret

Time: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm (includes materials, refreshments & lunch)

Cost: \$30 SHRM Members, \$40 Non-SHRM Members

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Couple	STAYWELL Aetna High Option Aetna Low Option StayWell Annual savings = \$1,999 + Potential Refund of \$ 750	\$130.00 \$206.90 \$191.39	\$182.00 No Dental Plan No Dental Plan
Family	STAYWELL Aetna High Option Aetna Low Option StayWell Annual savings = \$2,999 + Potential Refund of \$ 1,236	\$208.00 \$322.96 \$298.78	\$265.00 No Dental Plan No Dental Plan

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Out of Pocket Annual Maximum:
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*Some conditions apply

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No Refund Program
Common Law Spouses Covered at Higher Rates
70 – 80% coverage for off-island inpatient care

Out of Pocket Annual Maximums:
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Low Option: Single = \$ 10,000; family = \$ 30,000

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Applications for Fund consultancy 'non-responsive'

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

All proposals received by the NMI Retirement Fund for its vacant investment consultant position were found non-responsive, meaning they were deemed ineligible based on the criteria, conditions, and requirements set for the position.

Fund administrator Richard Villagomez said the agency also didn't receive proposals for its actuarial consultant and external auditor positions, which have been advertised since October.

To date, these three positions remain vacant. The Fund also remains without money

managers to handle its investment portfolio.

The board declined to name the four off-island applicants for investment consultant, pending notification of these non-responsive proposers.

Board chair Sixto Igisomar and Villagomez emphasized that the agency lost its important service providers in September following the enactment of the Beneficiaries Derivative Act, which allows retirees to take legal action on behalf of trusts or the Fund when the trustees who manage them refuse to bring such actions.

Last Friday, the board decided to re-announce all posi-

tions, this time giving applicants a longer time to respond. Under the previous emergency announcement, the Fund was given a shorter period of time to scout for applicants. A normal RFP announcement usually lasts 30 days.

The investment and actuarial consultant positions are expected to be re-announced in the first week of January 2012, while the board awaits guidance from the Office of the Public Auditor on how the Fund can carry out its mandated annual audit.

Villagomez said the Fund told OPA about the difficulty it is having in finding an external auditor to work on the Fund's audit that will be part

of the single audit for the CNMI government. He said OPA is working on tapping the services of an independent auditing firm that will be directly contracted by OPA.

The board earlier disclosed that every announcement made in national magazines for the investment consultant position alone costs the Fund an additional \$5,000. The cost may continue to increase if RFPs will continue to yield unsatisfying results.

Besides these key positions, the Fund is also looking for two more litigation attorneys. The positions have been announced twice already, also because of the lack of applicants.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 21, 2000

House OK's Sablan's appointment

New Public Auditor Michael S. Sablan easily courted the confidence and support of the House of Representatives as he hurdled yesterday the last round of the confirmation process to assume the critical post. Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio's former close finance advisor is now officially the chief of the Office of Public Auditor, five days after he was nominated to replace Leo L. LaMotte who retired on December 16. Members of the lower house hailed his appointment during a special session yesterday to confirm him. On Tuesday, the Senate praised him at a hearing conducted by its Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations.

Holiday musical performance by NMC

The Northern Marianas College's Community Service Programs invites everyone from the community to celebrate with the children its Holiday Parade Musical Performance. The program is scheduled for this coming Friday, Dec. 22, at 6:30 p.m. at the Susupe Multi-Purpose Center. A group of 19 children from various schools have been practicing for more than a month with John Jenkins to make this holiday event spectacular. A highly reputable and well-praised curriculum, Music K-8 was used to make this performance become a reality. The songs to be performed by the children truly define the real meaning of the holiday season.

Dec. 21, 2001

CPA steps up efforts to hike non-aviation income

The Commonwealth Ports Authority is asking the Senate to fast-track the passage of a proposed measure that would exempt the agency from paying the \$6,000 fee for each gaming machine. The CPA is pressing for the passage of the proposed measure - House Bill 12-400 - in its efforts to immediately install gaming machines at all CNMI airports, which is part of a major plan that would help increase the agency's revenue-generating capabilities. The proposed measure authorizes the commercial operation of amusement machines at the air transport facilities in the CNMI. It practically waives the applicable license fees for amusement machines owned or operated by the CPA.

Crisis dims prospects for Fund's Christmas wish

Retirement Fund legal counsel Kathleen Troy-Rucker has only one thing on her Christmas wish list: for the government to pay the Fund everything it owes. Barring that, she only hopes that the new administration has some ideas on how the government can generate the kind of revenue it needs to sustain operations. This comes amid reports that the \$206 million projected revenue for Fiscal Year 2002 may not be realized due to the continuing slide of the economy. Finance officials have been quoted as saying that revenue could fall between a high of \$190 million to as low \$170 million next year.

Dec. 21, 2002

MPLT eyed to resolve textbook woes

The House of Representatives is considering an untapped source to assist the Public School System restock on critical school supplies, primarily textbooks-the lack of which are reportedly affecting student performance in public schools. Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider is looking to the Marianas Public Land Trust for aid, citing the need to address the welfare, educational, social, and political development of present generation students. "I think this is the time to tap these sources and help the education of our kids. I'm tired of hearing rhetorical defense saying that this is [money] for the future generation. What about the present generation, aren't they the future of our generation? So which generation do we draw the line on? What about this generation that are being subjected to less than adequate education?" Hofschneider said, while alluding to MPLT's Constitutional mandate.

PSS seeks \$1.2M reading grant

The Public School System recently submitted an application for a \$1.2 million grant to boost the reading skills of upper elementary and junior high school students. The grant approval, according to the PSS, would be known in February 2003. Education officials said the grant is necessary to address the severity of the lack of reading skills and progress in reading among upper grade students. They said that latest SAT9 results indicate that 8th grade students were only in the 31 percentile level in reading, while the 4th, 5th and 6th grade students were in the 34 percentile level.

Holiday Season Impaired Driving Month

Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over Campaign

November 27, 2011 through January 3, 2012

**BUZZED DRIVING IS DRUNK DRIVING AND FRIENDS
DON'T LET FRIENDS DRIVE DRUNK.**

**BAM! YOUR
LIFE JUST
CHANGED.**



**Have a Safe
Holiday Season!**

Drive drunk and you will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.



JOETEN'S 4-DAY STOCKING STUFFER SALE!

Wednesday to Saturday
December 21 to 24, 2011
8:00 am. to 10:00 pm.

SHOES 20% off	WATCHES 20% off	Selected Electronics 20 to 50% off	Handbags & Wallets 25% off	All Mens Shirts T-Shirts, Aloha, Knit, Polo 20% off	All Mens Pants Boardshorts, Jeans Slacks, Shorts 15% off	All Ladies Tops Blouses, Dresses Sets, Pajamas 20% off	All Ladies Pants Slacks, Shorts, Leggings, Jeans 20% off
Girls Clothing Shirts, Dresses Sets, Pants 20% off	Boys Clothing Shirts, Pants and Sets 20% off	Infant Clothing Shirts, Pants and Sets 15% off	Cosmetics & Fragrances 15% off	Toys and Games 25% off	Bicycles & Tricycles 25% off	Houseware 25% off	Rugs and Linen 25% off
Picnic and Patio 25% off	Christmas Candles 25% off	Christmas Linens 35% off	Christmas Housewares 30% off	Ribbon, Bow & Wrapping 35% off	Christmas Lights & Decoration 50% off	Christmas Lawn & Decoration 50% off	Paper Products 50% off

FROZEN PRODUCTS

	Chicken Leg Quarters 33 lbs. \$26⁴⁹		Chicken Thighs Quarters 22 lbs. \$16⁵⁹		Chicken Whole Fryers. \$1⁰⁹/lb.
	Norbest Turkey 10 or 26 lbs. \$1⁴⁹/lb.		Gusto Smoked Ham 19-24 lbs. \$1⁸⁹/lb.		Gusto Picnic Ham 5-9 lbs. \$1⁸⁹/lb.
	Bar-S Chuckwagon Hotdogs 1 lb. 99¢		May Brand Shrimp 26-39 ct. 2 lb. \$10⁶⁹		Tilapia 89¢/lb.

SUPERMARKET

	Kellogg's Pop Tart 21 oz. \$3⁵⁰		Barilla Pasta Spaghetti 16 oz. \$1⁹⁹		Special V. Dressing 16 oz. \$1⁴⁵
	Best Food Mayonnaise 64 oz. \$8⁹⁹		Tang Orange Mix 22 qt. 4 lb. \$8⁹⁹		Morton Iodized Salt 26 oz. 79¢
	Aspen State Wine 750 ml. (Any Flavor) \$5⁵⁵		Gossips Wine 750 ml. (Any Flavor) \$5⁵⁵		The Vine Brut Cuvee 750 ml. \$5⁹⁹

	Red Bell Pepper \$1⁷⁵/lb.		Brown Potato 79¢/lb.		Cello Lettuce \$1⁷⁵/pc.		Dozen XL Eggs \$2³⁵/dz.		Cantaloupe Melon 89¢/lb.
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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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To 2011: goodbye and good riddance

By JACK HAYES
MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

During these last 12 tumultuous months we’ve experienced more than 1,000 weather-related fatalities, more than 8,000 injuries and at least 12—a record for a single year—separate disasters with economic losses greater than \$1 billion.

Numbers like these have served as a wakeup call, a jolting realization that our society is increasingly vulnerable to the weather as a result of a growing population and sophisticated infrastructure that continues to expand.

And while we witnessed an unmatched succession of extremes in nearly every weather category this year, climate scientists have pointed to the likelihood that such extremes are not an anomaly but may be the new normal.

This doesn’t mean we wave the white flag and bow to nature’s whims. It means now is the time to take bold steps to build a weather-ready nation: one in which the public understands the threat of weather; communities prepare in advance; timely and credible warnings are issued; and people take prompt, effective action. The result: fewer deaths and economic losses from severe weather.

Our call to become weather-ready resonates with an invaluable network of partners in emergency management and the commercial weather enterprise who help identify, prioritize, and set in motion actions to improve the nation’s resiliency against severe weather. But a truly weather-ready nation requires that our entire society improve the way it responds when extreme weather threatens.

As a part of this effort, NOAA’s National Weather Service is will work to increase weather awareness through continued investment in research and technology to enhance the nation’s ability to monitor our world and predict its near-term changes and longer-term evolution. This includes deploying new radar advancements and securing the latest satellite technology.

Awareness also requires the integration of two different, yet complimentary, disciplines: environmental science and social science. Combined we can ensure the forecast and climate information critical to personal safety and economic vitality are fully understood and applied effectively.

Greater awareness will breed greater preparedness. With reliable weather and climate predictions spanning timescales of hours to years, sound decisions can be made. From prepared residents taking safe shelter more than a half hour before a tornado tears through a community, to farmers ready to adjust the schedule for planting crops, to business owners armed with information to improve existing revenue streams and even create new ones.

The bottom line is more lives and livelihoods will be saved.

We must make 2012 a less destructive and deadly year by becoming a more weather-ready nation through awareness, preparedness and action. Let’s hope for the best, but have a plan for the worst.

Jack Hayes is the director of NOAA’s National Weather Service.



A somber message to retirees

»How long are you likely to live without a pension if the Fund goes broke in two years?

Editor’s Note: This piece was originally published on Monday, Dec. 19, 2011. It is being reprinted today to show correct formatting of graph.

If you are a CNMI retiree you should be very concerned that your Retirement Fund may be broke within two years if the administration and the Legislature don’t act to save your pension. There is a very real possibility you may have to live your remaining years without the pension the government entered into a contract with you. Have you wondered just how long that might be? For those interested, read on to get an estimate.

This issue came to my mind as I considered the rapid diminishing resources of the Retirement Fund and the number of aging DBP retirees dependent upon their pensions when balanced against the approximate number of years of their remaining life after the close out of the Fund, which experts expect will occur in about 24 months or around 2014, if not sooner.

If you are curious about your remaining life span without a pension for yourself or a loved one, the following is something to give serious consideration. If you don’t want to know—stop here and read something else.

People responsible for calculating long term retirement payments use a very important statistical database to assist in the management of the financial resources placed in their trust as well as to determine future financial “payout” requirements, such as, for example, monthly payments to retirees.

These data are known as period life tables, which present what would happen to a hypothetical cohort (which is a group of people that share particular characteristics) if experienced throughout the group’s entire life of mortality conditions of a specific period of time. The period life table may be characterized as being a “snapshot” of current mortality experience.


Simply stated, and selecting a single hypothetical individual for purposes of citing an example, if Jose were to retire at age 65 and barring any fatal accident or catastrophic disease, statistics will tell us the average number of years of life remaining for Jose and all the others in his cohort will be 15.2 years or to age 80.2 years. Remember, it’s an estimate.

Life tables for the population in the Northern Marianas are calculated combining data for both the indigenous and non-indigenous resident population. The data presented herein are the latest available until the results of the census of 2010 are analyzed. While foreign workers are included, most tend to be under the age of 40. For my purpose, the data presented can be considered indicative of that which is expected to prevail and thus useful. As ages increase there are fewer foreign workers in each cohort series and the data become more reliable on the increasing age range scale.

The most frequently used life table statistic is the life expectancy, which is the average number of years of life remaining for persons who have attained a given age. For example, if your age is within the following age cohorts your estimated remaining life expectancy has been calculated as follows:

By WILLIAM H. STEWART

Special to the Saipan Tribune



The author, as a forensic economist, often utilizes life expectancy data, inflation and discount rates related to assignments within the judicial process. www.cnmi-guide.com/phm/esc/#forensic. He has more than 50 years experience with various economic development issues both internationally and within the NMI. Stewart has published more than 300 articles concerning various island issues, most of which are in Saipan Tribune archives.

MALES AT AGE	EST. YEARS LIFE REMAINING	EST. YEAR OF DEMISE*
40	36.5	2047
45	31.8	2043
50	27.3	2038
55	22.9	2034
60	18.9	2030
65	15.2	2026
70	12.0	2023
75	9.3	2020
80	6.9	2018

FEMALES AT AGE	EST. YEARS LIFE REMAINING	EST. YEAR OF DEMISE*
40	40.9	2052
45	36.1	2047
50	31.5	2042
55	27.0	2038
60	22.7	2034
65	18.7	2030
70	15.1	2026
75	11.8	2023
80	8.9	2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

* Fractions less than a full year not calculated. Years have been rounded.

As might be expected, data differ considerably as a result of ethnicity and gender. Females generally live longer than males. Some ethnicities have a shorter lifespan than others.

For those who are now retired—select your age range from the data table presented (or as close to it as possible) and from the opposite column locate the estimated number of years remaining as the life expectancy for that particular age. Deduct two years as representing the last remaining years of your pension payments as we have been told will occur if current diminishing conditions continue. Then multiply that figure by your annual retirement annuity and you will arrive at a figure that represents your theoretical “lost” retirement income for the rest of your life after about 24 months or around the year 2014.

If your retirement income is your only source of income you are destined for the welfare register of poverty.

While a few elected officials appear to be trying to assist retirees in their effort to salvage the Fund, far too many seem not to care. If attitudes and policies don’t change on the part of some within the central government as well as the Legislature and their respec-

See SOMBER on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Governance asks hardball questions

When simple villagers can no longer deal with the disastrous effects of the CNMI's economic paralysis, bankruptcy turns into daily bread, including the loss of hope and the treasured peaceful comforts of our island paradise. You quiz, "Is this the envisioned destiny from dysfunctional officials—appointed and elected—hailing from both sides of the Pacific Divide?"

Sad how paradise has become the colossal hellish hole of a once proud and enthusiastic people ready to build brighter tomorrows. Such enthusiasm has faded into the filthy swamp of failed promises that began with the miscalculated change on immigration and minimum wage.

Adding to the misery is the collusion of the administration and Legislature to warmly embrace "leadership deficit" over proactive pursuit of substantive issues. It's a tale of a disoriented bunch clueless to the hardship they have piled atop already paralyzed governance. This is the net effect of placing a once enthusiastic leadership on automatic pilot.

It's profoundly embarrassing, the inaction of legislators on the economic front. You probe their work only to find what's known as powder puff legislation on bicycle regulations and the prohibition of undergarments display. Their efforts are uselessly misguided as to miss providing real answers to the deepening economic mess at home.

Most legislators are clueless to the concept of wealth and jobs creation. At the same time, the administration occasionally flexes its muscle on the same concept with more misses than hits. This, as it stares blankly half the time dazed at the dystopia it has created by pettifoggery and flogging issues with impunity. The obvious negligence and failure has only hardened the resolve of governance to declare the impending midterm election, "*No mas!*"

It brings into focus another query: How many of our men of wisdom actually have clarity of understanding of the first principles, the concept of "the consent of the governed" or the Bill of Rights, the difference between a republic and a democracy, or the distinct difference between natural and civil rights? It's time to quiz these guys if perchance they still wish to return to play hardball on substantive policies over shallow bicycle or undergarment regulations.

Meanwhile, how sad the quicksand of acquiescence when dealing with disastrous hardships, from lethal surcharge fees, flat or reduced salaries that translate into the loss of the first family home and

the paralysis against families with scholars abroad, to lack of decent meals as cost of basic commodities skyrocket and, most egregiously, the loss of hope to decently raise a family here in paradise.

Indeed, the cumulative effect of collective negligence from both sides of the Pacific Divide isn't just at our front door; it has already permeated every household here. If anything, for every year that you fail governance, you send their livelihood three years into the gutter. Now governance is saying "*No mas.*" And it isn't ready to be dazzled by another discordant "let it be" that has fallen flat on its face!

■ ■ ■

Self-government in NMI

The one issue that was taken from the CNMI is the opportunity to strengthen its democratic institutions. The feds wasted no time imposing its paternalistic attitude that it has sole authority to dangle our future any which way it wishes. It came in and imposed federal immigration and wage. Notice the magnitude of these statutes so equipped to completely paralyze what tiny fragile economy we had in recent past?

These impositions are reminders of how Congress stepped into Puerto Rico in recent history and imposed laws and regulations that killed and eradicated the tuna canning, pharmaceutical, and other manufacturing industries. Here it has successfully shut down apparel manufacturing, not to mention the complete annihilation of other manufacturing. Wasn't the feds obligated to ensure that it provides opportunities to advance the well-being of the CNMI per the Covenant agreement? Is the now collapsed economy the trophy it leaves under the Christmas tree for posterity?

Yes, we have our own share of misgivings conveniently orchestrated and prominently attached by liberal progressives in Congress to human rights abuses. Indeed, we were negligent in rectifying the mess at home. But is this form of interference from the feds the appropriate paradigm to undertake? Was slavery resolved during George Washington's term in office? Wasn't Thomas Jefferson guilty of preaching against slavery while owning some himself? Wasn't it until the sixteenth president that slavery was outlawed?

The point that must be understood is that the democratic process is an arduous and lengthy undertaking to reconcile. Our country is still struggling to recapture what made the U.S. a great nation by returning to first principles, a true and tried foundation after 236 years. We started rudimentary democracy after the war with the in-

Postal Service seeks congressional action

By **FRANK SANTOS**
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

As Congress considers legislation to reform the business model of the Postal Service, it must confront a basic choice: to permit the Postal Service to function more as a business, or to constrain it from doing so.

Within the limits of our current legal framework, we have responded aggressively to a changing marketplace—reducing the size of our workforce by 128,000 career employees and reducing annual operating costs by \$12.5 billion dollars in just the past four years. However, to return to profitability we must move at a faster pace. And, to do so requires changes in the law.

With greater flexibility, the Postal Service can speed product and pricing decisions, enable a five-day per week delivery schedule, and permit the realignment of processing, delivery and retail networks to meet lower mail volumes. It would also allow the Postal Service

to more effectively manage its healthcare and retirement systems, and better leverage its workforce.

Most importantly, a financially stable Postal Service that can operate more like a business can more readily adapt to America's changing mailing and shipping needs.

The underlying value of the Postal Service, and the value of mail as a communications medium, remains strong.

The Postal Service delivered 168 billion pieces of mail in 2011 and supported nearly \$10 trillion in commerce. And, we will continue to play a vital role in the American economy and society for generations to come. The Postal Service is far too integral to the economic health of the nation to be handcuffed to the past and to an inflexible business model. To best serve taxpayers and postal customers, it's time to remove the constraints.

Frank Santos is the acting district manager of the U.S. Postal Service Honolulu District.

Letter to the Editor

The simple truth

Asia Pacific Hotel, Inc. and Tan Holdings Corp. are exceedingly pleased with the jury's verdict entered yesterday morning in the U.S. District Court.

It was a hard fought trial; however, at the end of the day the jury found that the complaining witness was not exposed to a hostile work environment. The simple truth is that my clients have expended a considerable amount of human resources, time, and treasure ensuring compliance with all applicable laws including those addressing sexual harassment and discrimination issues. Tan Holding Corp. and Asia Pacific Hotels, Inc. are good corporate citizens.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission spent thousands upon thousands of taxpayer's money prosecuting this questionable case. The commission flew two experienced trial attorneys to Saipan approximately three weeks ago to work exclusively

on this case. The commission hired a \$350 hour labor law expert who was flown to Saipan to testify.

Perhaps this case will send a message to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and other United States government enforcement agencies that they should consider changing their focus from aggressive litigation/enforcement actions to a policy that emphasizes training and cooperation with employers here. In point of fact, the EEOC had not shared its training capabilities and other resources with the people of the CNMI.

We would welcome such a change of focus and we look forward to working productively with the United States EEOC in the future.

Steven P. Pixley
Chief legal counsel
Tan Holdings Corp.

By **JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Delrosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune's Opinion Section.



stallation of the first elected mayor and municipal council. It wasn't smooth sailing either in that it got mired in racism between Chamorros and Carolinians. Even the ugly dust of this development took years before it settled down. The populist election replaces political maturity and we are still marching toward that elusive goal post.

Still optimistic though that someday we shall overcome and get on to the real task of strengthening our democratic institutions.

SOMBER

From Page 10

tive contractual, legal, and moral financial obligation to you as a retiree—if your elected representatives, don't stop their endless talking as a substitute for a meaningful productive solution to the mess they have created it's going to be "sorry about that" because your pension will not be available as your future years unfold.

So, here's another problem. Since the older a person becomes the more personal medical attention becomes a costly fact of life, thus greater pressure on health providers and CHC and, of course, the NMI government's sponsored health and life insurance program. For more on serious potential problems with this issue see the *Saipan Tribune* archives of Dec. 6, 2011, titled: "Message for retirees: What happens to the retiree's Group Health and Life Insurance plan when the Fund goes broke?"

Don't forget it was the government's decision to opt out of participating in the U.S. Social Security program, selecting instead the CNMI's own "locally" controlled and administered retirement program (which it was known would be outside U.S. law and oversight). Friends, do you suppose that at the time certain lawmakers saw where they could arrange for obscenely selfish and exorbitantly generous pensions for themselves. Ask Fund officials how many retired recipients over the years were paid annual pensions of \$100,000 each or more. Ask how many were paid between \$75,000 and \$95,000 per year.

As a former Fund administrator pointed out in an article several years ago (Dec. 7, 2004), Fund records indicated the highest pension released was \$150,000 a year to a retiree as a former member of the Judiciary. That amount of money is equal to paying six retirees annual pensions of \$25,000 each. Several years ago an administrator of the Fund was quoted in a local paper (Dec. 7, 2004) that combined pensions for six retirees totaled \$670,000 per year, which averages about \$111,666 per year per person. Compare that with your pension. Now do you understand why the Social Security program was not wanted at the time a retirement program for the NMI was being considered. Don't get "screwed" twice.

For those readers connected to the Internet, the following site displays a calculator that estimates your life expectancy. It was developed by Northwestern Mutual Life. It's interesting that there are only 13 questions. Yet, they can predict how long you're likely to live. Just be honest with your answers. Go to: <http://media.nmfn.com/tnetwork/lifespan>






For still another source for estimating life expectancy, Google the Social Security Life Tables. Find your age and the corresponding years remaining of life opposite your age. Then determine how many years you will be without a pension and the lost amount over your remaining lifespan.

If things don't change and the government continues on its present course, the iceberg is in front of you as a retiree and there are no lifeboats on the horizon. So think about this. It's not only the retiree who will suffer when their individual pension is no longer available; their entire family will be saddened and in some measure adversely impacted. The retiree's surviving parents, siblings, aunts and uncles—many family members will feel the loss and the strain. Add to this the monetary loss to the economy by reduced consumer expenditures as well as also the hidden increased cost to the government required to fill the breach by increasing government social and welfare programs for the new island poor. I wonder if the politicians have thought about the above as a "multiplier meltdown."

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				
Partly cloudy and with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°	▲ 87° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 86 ▼ 77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲ 87 ▼ 78
Chuuk	Showers	▲ 84 ▼ 80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 84 ▼ 78
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 84 ▼ 78
Majuro	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 79

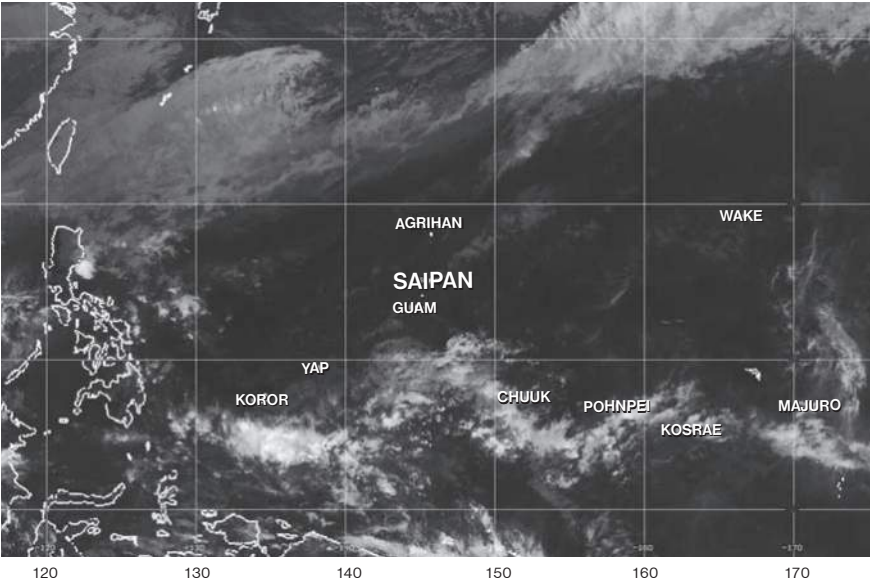
Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲ 68 ▼ 58
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 33 ▼ 17
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲ 67 ▼ 57
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲ 80 ▼ 72
London	Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 47
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲ 62 ▼ 44
Manila	Thundershowers	▲ 86 ▼ 75
Melbourne	Sunny	▲ 83 ▼ 55
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 81 ▼ 72
New York	Rain	▲ 56 ▼ 46
Osaka	Showers	▲ 52 ▼ 41
Paris	Cloudy	▲ 50 ▼ 46
Pusan	Windy	▲ 39 ▼ 22
Rome	Sunny	▲ 54 ▼ 38
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲ 43 ▼ 29
San Francisco	Sunny	▲ 62 ▼ 43
Seoul	Sunny	▲ 26 ▼ 16
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲ 52 ▼ 38
Washington, DC	Showers	▲ 62 ▼ 47

Tides

Saipan Harbor			
5:13 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
10:01 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
3:44 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
11:18 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2011

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A stationary front extends southwestward from just northeast of Minami Tori Shima at 25N155E to beyond 130E at 18N. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and north of this boundary to beyond 25N. A near equatorial trough heads east-southeastward from 2N130E to end at EQ139E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found south of Koror and Yap between 3N and 6N from 130E to 142E. A surface trough reaches northward from EQ145E to 11N145E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are occurring south of Guam between 4N and 10N from 142E to 150E. Trade-wind convergence is producing a band of scattered showers and a few thunderstorms that crosses much of Micronesia. This weather feature is located south of Chuuk just south of Pohnpei over Kosrae and over Butaritari atoll within 100 miles of a line from 6N150E to 4N155E to 6N171E to 3N176E to 4N180.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Thursday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Saturday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Sunday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:41 AM	2:28 PM
Thursday	3:43 AM	3:24 PM
Friday	4:47 AM	4:23 PM
Saturday	5:49 AM	5:24 PM
Sunday	6:48 AM	6:26 PM

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- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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 - Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 6, 2011

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) C05062 2:10am 2:40am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) C05064 5:15am 5:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP) C05064 4:15am 4:50am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN) C05062 3:10am 3:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) C05070 4:15am 5:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05068 8:25am 9:15am Daily C05074 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05076 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 6:50pm 7:40pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 7:00pm 7:50pm 3, 6 C05072 9:55pm 10:45pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05072 10:05pm 10:55pm 3, 6	GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN C05062 2:10am 3:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05069 2:45am 3:35am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05071 7:00am 7:50am Daily C05073 10:05am 10:55am 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05075 1:40pm 2:30pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:30pm 6:20pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:40pm 6:30pm 3, 6 C05079 8:35pm 9:25pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05079 8:45pm 9:35pm 3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:35am Daily DL297 4:35pm 7:20pm Daily	NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL288 8:40pm 1:15am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily	SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:35am 7:05am 4, 7	BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 2:20am+1 3, 6
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6	GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7	SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:40pm 5:00am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05070/191 4:35am 9:45am 3, 6 via GUM DL287/173 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT C05068/183 8:25am 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05068/183 8:25am 9:40pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:40pm 1, 4, 7 via GUM C05076/193 3:10pm 11:00pm 2, 5 via GUM-Palau OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN C05072/PR111 9:55pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM C05072/PR111 10:05pm 7:50am+1 3, 6 via GUM	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN OZ704/603 12:10am 2:20pm Daily via ICN DL172/288 8:00am 1:15am+1 Daily via NRT C0190/5077 10:55am 6:30pm 3, 6 via GUM C0190/5079 10:55am 9:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN PR110/C05071 10:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM C0192/5071 10:25pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM-Palau C0184/5071 11:10pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM C0184/5071 11:59pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 12:00pm 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 12:00pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05076/179 3:10pm 10:25pm 1, 5 via GUM OZ604/723 3:20pm 10:30pm Daily via ICN OZ604/749 3:20pm 11:00pm 1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ724/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ750/603 1:10am 2:20pm 1, 2, 4, 6 via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN C0180/5071 11:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 5 via GUM
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana	
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)	

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 1750	17:50	18:20	Daily	Tinian-Saipan			
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tourism Education Council gets a call from Docomo Pacific



Docomo Pacific general manager James Nelson, center, presents a \$5,200 donation to the Marianas Tourism Education Council on Dec. 15, 2011, at the Docomo Office in Gualo Rai. Also pictured are MTEC chair Vicky Benavente, fifth from right; MTEC treasurer Nhing Reyes, sixth from left; Docomo Pacific retail operations manager Pauline Johnson, fourth from right; and Docomo Pacific staff who assisted with the Docomo Pacific Golf Classic 2011.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday greetings go out to Mrs. Lina Villagomez! Wishing you a very happy, happy birthday! We wish you luck, courage, and strength to continue your successful journey of life for many more years. God bless! Greetings come from your Smart-Start staff.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday to Advent Lubu-mad! We wish you all the best and may you fulfill your dreams! God bless! Greetings come from your Joeten Ace Hardware family!



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday greetings go out to the best grandpa, Efrain Borja, who is celebrating his special day today, Dec. 21! We love you! Greetings come from your grandkids in Germany, Washington, and Saipan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy birthday to Jo Ann Cruzana! May the nicest and sweetest surprises come your way. God bless! Greetings come from your family!

"Tourism is Everybody's Business," is the slogan for the Marianas Tourism Education Council, which recently received a boost from Docomo Pacific. MTEC was presented with a contribution of over \$5,200 from Docomo Pacific on Dec. 15, 2011.

James Nelson, Docomo Pacific general manager, stated, "MTEC has been instrumental with educating the CNMI youth on the benefits of the tourism and visitor industry. This is our way of sup-

porting the MTEC programs that the MTEC and MY WAVE Clubs are committed to, namely, instilling the 'Hafa Adai Culture' in all our schools."

MTEC chair Vicky Benavente said, "The MTEC is fortunate to partner with Docomo Pacific for supporting our community-based activities focusing on tourism education with our children, the future leaders of our islands. The support from Docomo Pacific will also provide

opportunities for the formation of more MY WAVE Clubs in the schools."

MTEC is a nonprofit organization promoting community awareness on the importance of the visitor industry in the Northern Marianas. Membership is open to all interested parties. For more information, contact the Marianas Visitors Authority Community projects manager Martin Duenas at mduenas@mymarianas.com or (670) 664-3210. (MVA)



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-12-005

PROCUREMENT & INSTALLATION OF LED STREET LIGHTS

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified and experienced firms for the procurement and installation of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) Street Lights on Saipan, Tinian and Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) under the AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA).

The Bid Packet may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card, in the amount of \$100.00 for one set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 4, 2012 at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.10, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-12-005, Procurement and Installation of Light Emitting Diodes (LED) Street Lights" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 4, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 19, 2012 at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before submission deadline. Late submissions and conditional offers will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety firm holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. A Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety firm must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety firm must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers questions, concerns and qualification be should handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

The bidder is required to submit a copy of his CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page - <http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/cnmi/cnmi.htm>. The contractor will also be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws including the Davis Bacon Act.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or supply under the contract. The IFB does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for goods. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 10:00 AM (ChST) on January 9, 2012 to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Officer, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Alfredo Palattao, Power Division Engineer via email alfredo.palattao@cucgov.org and Ms. Janina Mika Muna, Administrative Assistant, Procurement & Supply via mika.muna@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

/s/ ABE UTU MALAE
Executive Director



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



AMENDED PUBLIC NOTICE OF CUC'S PROPOSED WATER & WASTEWATER RATE INCREASE AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON JANUARY 21, 2012 AT 10:00 A.M.

This is a notice of a formal request to increase the rates, fees and/or charges of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), ("rate case"), and of a public hearing related to it. The CNMI Public Utilities Commission (Commission) regulates the CUC pursuant to Public Law 15-35, as amended.

On October 10, 2011, CUC filed a petition and supporting evidence with the Commission to raise its water and wastewater rates, and some electric fees and charges, as rate case Docket 12-01.

CUC is currently operating at a substantial deficit, relies entirely on the revenues from its customers and federal grants, and needs the proposed rate increases in order for the company to maintain financial health. Additionally, CUC is required by statute and a US District Court Stipulated Order to achieve "full cost recovery." This means that CUC's revenues must fully cover the cost of providing service to its ratepayers. CUC's costs include the costs of maintenance, repair, materials and supplies, labor, replacement of water and sewer pipes, pumping and treatment facilities, vehicles, meters and other equipment. CUC's filing supports a conclusion that the water and wastewater rates are set substantially below the true cost of service.

CUC says that its rate increase request is primarily due to reasons that are beyond CUC's control, including the above matters and overall rates that have been below cost. CUC requests that the Commission adopt the proposed rate increases, **to become effective February 20, 2012, or thirty days after the date of the hearing**, as determined by the Commission, as follows:

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION PROPOSED RATE DESIGN			
	Current	Effective Feb 20, 2012	
WATER Rates			
ESTIMATED PURCHASED POWER CHARGE			
All Customer Classes - Per 1,000 Gallons	NA	\$	2.11
NOTE: subject to revision based on changes to Electric rates			
METERED Customers			
Monthly Service Fee		\$	
5/8" x 3/4", 3/4"	10.95	\$	10.95
1"	12.67		12.67
1 1/2"	15.91		15.91
2"	25.34		25.34
3"	63.35		63.35
4"	99.55		99.55
6"	135.75		135.75
8"	199.10		199.10
10"	280.55		280.55
12"	362.00		362.00
Volume Rate Per 1,000 Gal			
Residential			
Commercial			
-	3,000	1.81	1.81
3,001	15,000	4.34	2.60
15,001	30,000	5.43	3.32
30,001	60,000	6.34	4.23
60,001	Above	7.24	5.13
Multi-Family			
-	3,000	1.81	2.86
3,001	15,000	4.34	2.90
15,001	30,000	5.43	2.90
30,001	60,000	6.34	2.86
60,001	Above	7.24	2.86
CUC			
Government			
-	Above	54.30	54.30
Public School System			
-	Above	54.30	44.30
UNMETERED Customers - Fixed Charge			
Residential	40.00		54.00
Multi-Family	40.00		54.00
Commercial	204.00		275.40
CUC	204.00		275.40
Government	204.00		275.40
Public School System	204.00		275.40

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION PROPOSED RATE DESIGN				
SCENARIO: 11 12 08 Application Notice of Intent				
	Current	Effective Feb 20, 2012		
WASTEWATER Rates				
ESTIMATED PURCHASED POWER CHARGE				
All Customer Classes -- Per 1,000 Gallons	NA	\$	2.68	
NOTE: subject to revision based on changes to Electric rates				
METERED/UNMETERED Customers				
<u>Residential</u>				
Monthly Service Fee		\$	9.89	\$ 12.21
Vol Rate/1,000 Gal	-	0.000	1.50	1.76
6,001	Above		3.13	3.94
<u>Commercial</u>				
Monthly Service Fee			9.24	11.64
Vol Rate/1,000 Gal	-	0.000	3.00	3.75
6,001	Above		3.13	3.94
<u>CUC Government</u>				
Vol Rate/1,000 Gal	-	Above	68.00	85.68
NOTE: Unmetered and Flat rates phased out upon completion of meter change-out program				

Notably, CUC seeks to implement three new customer classes, one for Multi-Family customers, one for Municipal pumping customers, and one for the Public School System. CUC also seeks to implement a Purchased Power Charge or Water and Wastewater electric charge that will be adjusted whenever CUC adjusts its Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause (LEAC) and/or its Monthly Fuel Adjustment Clause (MFAC) fuel charge. A Purchased Power Charge, or water and wastewater electric charge, means that CUC will charge a fee per 1,000 gallons of water or wastewater which represents the cost to CUC of providing the electric power CUC used to generate that water. This electric charge will be in addition to the new base rate amount, and is \$2.11 for water, and \$2.68 for wastewater.

CUC seeks to change the following fees and charges:

Fee or charge	Current level	Proposed level
1. Sewer Dumping Charge	\$ - 0 -	\$50.00
2. Inspection/Testing Charge	\$ - 0 -	\$50.00

CUC also seeks adoption of the following regulatory changes: adopt a requirement for the primary account holder to be the owner or lessee of the property (revising NMIAC 50-10-005); adopt a requirement for corporate officers of a customer to be personally liable for utility bills (revising NMIAC 50-10-005); adopt a provision to allow CUC to disconnect without notice after receiving two NSF checks in a 12-month period (new Regulation); and reenact NMIAC 50-10-101 and NMIAC 50-30-305 with changes suggested by the CNMI Law Revision. CUC would also like to separate billing regulations from service regulations by reenacting those regulations in separate parts or adding to NMIAC 50-40. Finally, CUC seeks changes to the Public Utilities Commission's contract protocol.

CUC further seeks approval to conduct a non-rate revenue analysis; requests approval of its Security Services contract; seeks input on engaging experts to study CUC's capacity in the context of renewable energy generation on CUC's grid; seeks approval of three changes to its Interim Financial Plan; seeks establishment of a Net Metering Tariff; and seeks input on its government receivable issue, including a proposed Memorandum of Understanding with the central government and Public School System.

Two petitions submitted by Senator Juan Ayuyu on the topic of CUC providing non-potable or agricultural water on the island of Rota will be considered.

The Commission will conduct a public hearing on **Saturday, January 21, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.** at the Retirement Fund Conference Room, located in the Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, to receive evidence, argument, discussion and public comment on the above regulatory matter. The Commission will later conduct a special business meeting to consider and make decisions regarding matters considered at the public hearing.

A set of the CUC rate case petitions, and the written testimony and the exhibits, is available for download from the internet as follows:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Type ftp.economists.com. Do not type "http://" or anything else, just ftp.economists.com.
3. Click on "Page" - upper right corner of Internet Explorer window.
4. Click on "Open FTP Site in Windows Explorer".
5. An entry window will pop up. Enter user name: "Cucftp"; and password: "Cucsaipan1". Both are case-sensitive.

A written copy of all petition materials will also be available for inspection at the following places: CUC Admin Office: Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building; CUC Tinian Office; CUC Rota Office.

Business

AT&T drops \$39B T-Mobile bid

LOS ANGELES (AP)—AT&T Inc. is hanging up on its \$39 billion bid to buy smaller wireless provider T-Mobile USA, nearly four months after the U.S. government raised concerns that the deal would raise prices, reduce innovation and give customers fewer choices.

The long-expected announcement left AT&T grumbling about a shortage of airwaves to meet growing demand, while scrappy competitor T-Mobile remains up for sale by German parent Deutsche Telekom.

The formal end of the deal was heralded by critics. No. 3 carrier Sprint Nextel Corp. had feared “an undeniable duopoly” between the proposed new entity and current leader Verizon Wireless. The two companies would have controlled over almost 80 percent of the cellphone market had the deal gone through.

“This result is a victory for the millions of Americans who use mobile wireless telecommunications services,” Deputy U.S. Attorney General James Cole said. “A significant competitor remains in the marketplace and consumers will benefit from a quick resolution.”

The Justice Department had sued on Aug. 31 to block the

deal, and the Federal Communications Commission’s chairman came out against it last month. That prompted the companies to withdraw their FCC application while they strategized their next move.

Sanford Bernstein analyst Craig Moffett said the announcement was “a bit of an anticlimax.”

“This is like receiving the divorce papers for a couple that’s been separated for years,” he said.

AT&T’s purchase of fourth-ranked T-Mobile, announced in March, would have made it the largest cellphone company in the U.S. AT&T is now the second-largest wireless carrier, with more than 100 million subscribers, behind Verizon Wireless, with 108 million. Sprint has 53 million, followed by T-Mobile at 34 million.

T-Mobile endured without much investment from its parent company and without the highest-end devices such as Apple Inc.’s iPhone. It offered value packages to customers who brought phones from other carriers. Regulators feared the loss of T-Mobile as a competitor would hurt consumers.

AT&T will now have to pay

Deutsche Telekom \$3 billion in cash as a breakup fee and give it about \$1 billion worth of airwaves, known as spectrum, that AT&T doesn’t need for the continued rollout of its high-speed “4G” network.

It will also enter into a roaming agreement with Deutsche Telekom so that AT&T’s and T-Mobile’s customers can use each other’s networks.

AT&T will take an accounting charge of \$4 billion in the current quarter.

In pulling out, AT&T said the government’s attempts to block the deal do not change the challenges of the wireless phone industry. Cellphone companies have been clamoring for more airwaves to meet growing demand for faster downloads on smartphones and tablet computers.

The company said the deal would have solved that problem for a time, and without it, “customers will be harmed and needed investment will be stifled.”

AT&T said it will continue to invest, and it called on the government to quickly approve its purchase of unused spectrum from Qualcomm Inc. and come up with legislation to meet the nation’s long-term needs.

ITC sides with Apple in patent dispute with HTC

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A federal agency is siding with Apple and ordering an import ban on HTC phones that infringe on a patent belonging to the iPhone maker.

The U.S. International Trade Commission said Monday that the ban will take effect April 19 so that wireless carriers will have time to adjust their plans. The ITC said in a final ruling that HTC Corp. may import some refurbished phones to offer customers as replacements under warranties and insurance plans. HTC, which is based in Taiwan, is a major maker of phones that use Google Inc.’s Android operating software.

Apple Inc. had initially complained about HTC violating

several of its patents in April 2010, though the commission narrowed its decision down to just one patent. The patent in question deals with data detection, enabling smartphone functions such as the ability to tap on a phone number or address contained in an email to immediately call the number or find the address on a map.

It’s not immediately known which phones are covered by the ban. In an e-mailed statement, HTC general counsel Grace Lei said the patent in question affects a small part of the user experience and it will soon remove it from any affected phones.

Apple spokeswoman Kristen Huguette reiterated an ear-

lier statement, saying competitors should create their own technology.

The case is part of a broader dispute involving Cupertino, Calif.-based Apple, HTC and other phone makers. In federal courts and before the ITC, companies have been accusing one another of stealing ideas for popular phone features. While the courts can award damages, the commission has the power to block imports of products and parts made with contested technology.

The U.S. International Trade Commission issued an initial ruling in October that Apple’s iPhone does not violate four patents owned by HTC, a blow to the company.

FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR

Forbes ranks BoH among America’s top performers

h HONOLULU, Hawaii—**Bank of Hawaii** For the third year in a row, *Forbes Magazine* has named Bank of Hawaii as one of the top banks in the country.

Bank of Hawaii was named No. 2 among the 100 largest U.S. banks and thrifts; it topped the *Forbes*’ list the two previous years. (The 2011 rankings were published in its Dec. 13 online edition.)

Peter Ho, Bank of Hawaii chairman, president, and CEO, said, “Attaining this ranking

speaks positively about our community, our clients, and especially our employees who work so hard to fulfill our customers’ needs. It’s particularly gratifying to be named among the top performing banks for all three years that *Forbes* has conducted this ranking.”

To determine the ranking, *Forbes* partnered with SNL Financial and evaluated U.S.-owned banks and thrift institutions ranging in asset size from \$4.6 billion (Beneficial Mutual Bancorp) to \$2.3 trillion (JPMorgan Chase). Bank of Hawaii has assets

of \$13 billion. (Texas-based Prosperity Bancshares was ranked #1.)

The *Forbes*/SNL ranking was based on eight different financial performance measures, which included:

- return on average equity,
- net interest margin,
- non-performing loans as a percentage of loans,
- non-performing assets as percentage of assets,
- reserves as a percentage of non-performing loans,
- two capital ratios (Tier 1 and risk-based), and
- leverage ratio.

Nation

Deadly snowstorm stops travel across Great Plains

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—A late-autumn snowstorm lumbered into the Great Plains on Monday, unleashing snow and fierce winds that turned roads to ice, reduced visibility to zero and jeopardized thousands of holiday motorists’ travel plans just two days before the official start of winter.

The storm was blamed for a fatal accident in eastern Colorado, where a guard and an inmate were killed when a prison van lost control along an icy highway. Eight other inmates and a prison employee were hospitalized with moderate to serious injuries, according to the Colorado State Patrol.

National Guard troops and sheriff’s deputies in the Texas Panhandle were called out on nearly 100 rescues after Interstate 40, a major east-west route, was closed Monday night from Amarillo into New Mexico. No injuries were immediately reported and several shelters were being set up,



AP Northbound traffic on I-25 approaches Santa Fe, N.M. in a single file as snow accumulates on the road, Monday Dec. 19, 2011 as a winter storm hit the area.

Oldham County sheriff’s dispatchers said.

From northern New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle through Oklahoma and northwestern Kansas, blizzard conditions put state road crews on alert and had motorists taking refuge and early exits off major roads.

In northern New Mexico, snow and ice forced the closure of all roads from the town of Raton to the Texas and Oklahoma borders about 90 miles away. Hotels in Clayton, N.M., just east of where the three states touch, were nearly full.

Linda Pape, general manager of the Clayton Super 8 motel said it was packed with unhappy skiers who had been headed to lodges in Colorado and elsewhere in New Mexico.

“They lost a day or two of skiing, and they had budgeted an amount of money they were going to spend, and now they have to spend more staying somewhere else,” she said.

Clinton urges stable transition in NKorea

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration called for a peaceful and stable leadership transition in North Korea on Monday but made few demands on a nuclear-armed nation known for its unpredictability, poverty and hostility to the United States.

Prospects for new nuclear disarmament talks involving North Korea and the United States appeared to dim with the unexpectedly sudden death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il and uncertainty surrounding the planned succession to his politically untested son. Top Obama administration national security officials are focusing intelligence and other assets on the opaque internal politics of the reclusive

communist nation that President George W. Bush once placed on an “axis of evil” enemies list.

President Barack Obama conferred by phone Monday night with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda to underscore the U.S. commitment to Japan and other close allies, the White House said in a statement. Obama also conveyed the importance he places on stability in the region, according to the White House.

Obama spoke Sunday night with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, and the administration also contacted officials in China and Russia following the news of Kim’s death, the White House said.

“We are deeply concerned

with the well-being of the North Korean people and our thoughts and prayers are with them during these difficult times,” Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said in a statement Monday night. “It is our hope that the new leadership of the DPRK will choose to guide their nation onto the path of peace by honoring North Korea’s commitments, improving relations with its neighbors, and respecting the rights of its people.”

Clinton had met earlier in the day with Japanese Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba and told reporters at the State Department that Japan and the U.S. hope for better relations with North Korea.

Congress moves toward standoff over payroll tax

WASHINGTON (AP)—Partisan to the core, Congress careened toward a holiday-season standoff Monday on legislation to prevent a Social Security payroll tax increase for 160 million workers on Jan. 1.

“It’s time to stop the nonsense. We can resolve these differences and we can do it in a way that provides certainty for job creators and others,” said Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio. A vote was set for Tuesday for the House to reject a bipartisan two-month extension that cleared the Senate over the weekend and seek negotiations on a bill to renew the cuts through 2012.

In an acid response, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid

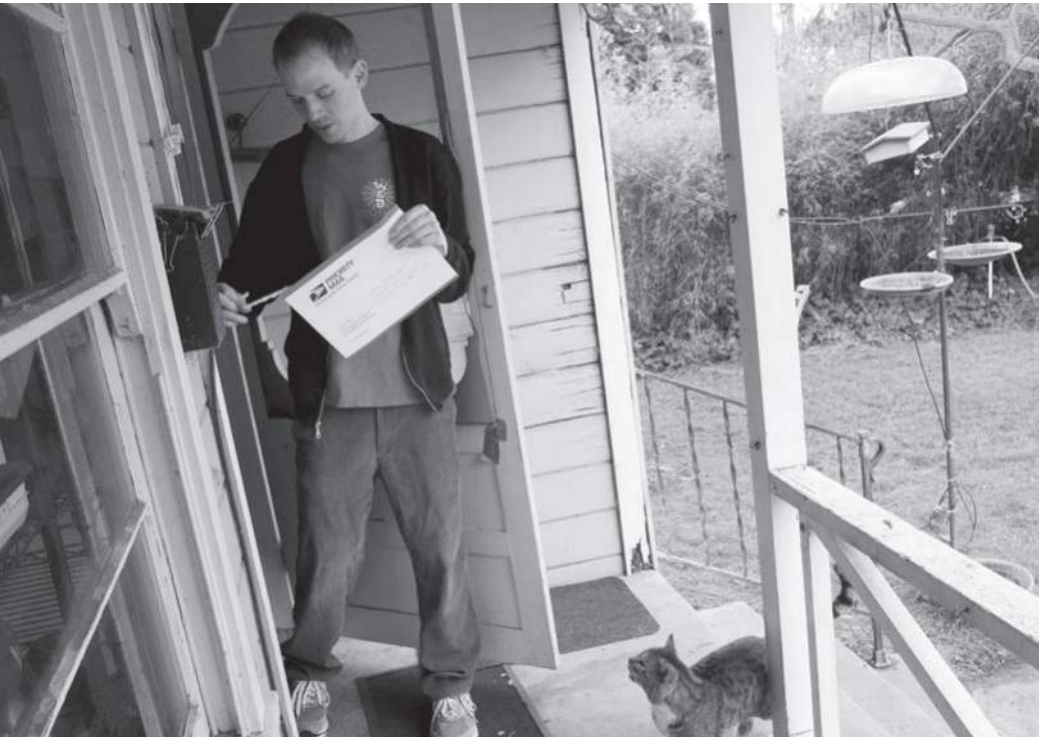
accused Boehner of risking a tax increase for millions “just because a few angry tea partiers raised their voices.” The Nevada Democrat ruled out new negotiations until the two-month measure is enacted.

That left the two parties approaching Christmas-week gridlock over an effort to pass core elements of President Barack Obama’s jobs program—renewal of the tax cuts and long-term unemployment benefits—that Republican and Democratic leaders alike said they favored.

It was the latest and likely the last such partisan confrontation in a year of divided government that brought the Tre-

sury to the brink of a first-ever default last summer, and more than once pushed the vast federal establishment to the edge of a partial shutdown.

This time, unlike the others, Republican divisions were prominently on display. The two-month measure that cleared the Senate, 89-10, on Saturday had the full support of the GOP leader, Sen. Mitch McConnell, who also told reporters he was optimistic the House would sign on. Senate negotiators had tried to agree on a compromise to cover a full year, but were unable to come up with enough savings to offset the cost and prevent deficits from rising.



In this photo taken Dec. 15, 2011, Trent Arsenault receives a certified letter regarding his sperm donation to a potential parent at his home in Fremont, Calif. Arsenault has fathered 14 children in the last five years through free sperm donations to childless couples he meets on the Internet.

USDA warns unconventional donor to stop donating sperm

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A man from the San Francisco Bay area has fathered 14 children in the last five years through free sperm donations to women he meets through his website—and is now in trouble with the federal government.

The case of Trent Arsenault of Fremont has drawn attention to the practice of informal sperm donation, which physicians and bioethicists call unsafe but some people say is a civil liberties issue.

Arsenault says he donates sperm out of a sense of service to help people who want to have children but can't afford conventional sperm banks. The 36-year-old minister's son has four more children on the way.

"I always had known through people praying at church that there's fertility issues," Arsenault told The Associated Press on Monday. "I thought it would just be a neat way of service to help the community."

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration sent Arsenault a cease-and-desist letter late last year telling him he must stop because he does not follow the agency's requirements for getting tested for sexually transmitted diseases within seven days before giving sperm. The FDA did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Violators of FDA regulations on human cells and tissues face up to a year in prison and a \$100,000 fine, according to guidelines published on the agency's website.

Arsenault gets tested regularly, but following the FDA's rules would make it impossible to keep offering his sperm for free, he said.

"The regulations may be little bit strict, but I think that's appropriate," said Dr. Mitchell Rosen, director of the University of California, San Francisco Fertility Preservation Center.

Rosen said it's not uncommon for women to use donated sperm from someone they know. But trusting a donor who is being honest about his background is no substitute for screening for diseases that could be passed on to the mother or child, he said.

A sperm bank will also isolate the actual sperm cells from the donor's semen, which reduces the risk of passing along pathogens, Rosen said. "In this situation there's no reduction of risk. It's just as if they're going out and having a one night stand."

Arsenault believes the FDA tracked him down from his website, which advertises his availability as a sperm donor. While some men offer their sperm through anonymous ads on Craigslist, Arsenault's site is filled with photographs of the trim, blond Midwest native. In its letter, the agency describes Arsenault's service as a business. Arsenault disagrees.

"This is not a business or a clinic. It's just people partnering up to have a baby out of compassion," he said.

At the time of the FDA letter, the Silicon Valley computer security specialist had made 328 sperm donations to 46 women, a number he said is now higher. He can continue to donate sperm while the case is pending.

Experts say the volume of sperm donations by Arsenault creates risks for future generations. They say the greater the number of children, the greater the chances of spreading a genetic defect. Children who don't know they're related could also unwittingly have sex, though unlike the anonymous sperm donor system used by sperm banks, Arsenault keeps careful track of his offspring.

"There's a danger of accidental incest or inbreeding if you're the father of 14 children" and a habitual sperm donor, said

bioethicist Arthur Caplan at University of Pennsylvania. "Nobody should be involved as a sperm donor on that level. It's not safe."

Caplan said the FDA may have a tough time asserting its authority over this kind of informal activity, though. Other medical experts think the agency may have a case since it deals with the safety of public health.

"He should not be allowed to do it unless he gets himself tested" and follow the same rules as sperm banks, said Dr. Stanley Korenman, associate dean of ethics at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine.

The difference between asking a friend to donate sperm and the San Francisco case is a matter of volume, experts says.

"This guy is doing it commercially. He's turning out a lot of babies. If you have a friend doing it once or twice it's not a big deal," Korenman said.

The oldest child Arsenault has fathered is now 4. He and the recipients, whom he describes as "intimate partners," sign a legal agreement ahead of time stripping him of any custody rights and absolving him of any financial responsibility for the children.

But he says that part of the reason of making himself publicly visible as a sperm donor rather than remaining anonymous, as is typical with sperm banks, is because he and some of the families hope and expect he will have some involvement in the children's lives in the future.

He says he believes his case comes down to constitutional issues of a right to privacy and reproductive choice.

"It's not that much more different than a couple knowing each other who want to have a baby," Arsenault said. "It's just from me it comes in a cup versus sex."



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



AMENDED PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED INCREASE OF ELECTRIC BASE RATES AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON JANUARY 21, 2012 AT 10:00 A.M.

The CNMI Public Utilities Commission (Commission) regulates the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC). The Commission requires CUC to file a rate case when it seeks to adjust its base rates. In this filing, CUC requested an emergency change to its electric base rates.

Accordingly, on December 8, 2011, CUC filed an emergency petition with the Commission to raise its electric base rates, under Docket 09-1.

CUC's rate increase request is primarily due to reasons that are beyond CUC's control. CUC is required by CNMI law and the Stipulated Orders, entered in *United States v. CUC and CNMI*, 08-0051 (D.N.M.I.), to achieve "full cost recovery." This means that CUC's revenues must fully cover the cost of providing service to its ratepayers. This includes all costs of production, operation, and maintenance required to provide electric, water and sewer services to consumers. The rate increases CUC asks for are critical in order for it to attain financial health and comply with CNMI law and the Stipulated Orders. CUC seeks this emergency base rate increase to recover revenues lost from decreased loads; additional expenses from retirement fund increases; CDA payments; and increased costs from the approval of Telesource Change Order No. 5. In addition, CUC has asked the Commission to consider making a change to the timing and calculation of the Levelized Energy Adjustment Clause (LEAC); consider a street lighting charge and a standby charge; and to develop a Municipal Pumping station customer class.

In its amended petition, CUC requested that the Commission adopt an increase to its electric base rates, **to become effective February 20, 2012, or thirty days after the public hearing.** The proposed electric base rate increases are as follows:

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION PROPOSED ELECTRIC BASE RATE DESIGN						
	E.1 Residential	E.2 Commercial	E.3 Government	E.4 Residential Lifeline	E.5 Municipal Pumping	
CURRENT ELECTRIC RATES -- BASE CHARGE						
Monthly Customer Chg	\$ 6.62	\$ 9.06	\$ 9.06	\$ 5.60	NA	
Per kWh:						
-	0.0190	0.1020	0.1070	0.0160	NA	
501	0.0780	0.1020	0.1070	0.0780	NA	
1,001	0.1020	0.1020	0.1070	0.1020	NA	
2,001	0.1500	0.1020	0.1070	0.1500	NA	
Above						
PROPOSED ELECTRIC RATES -- BASE CHARGE						
Monthly Customer Chg	\$ 9.49	\$ 12.99	\$ 12.99	\$ 8.03	\$ 12.99	
Per kWh:						
-	0.0270	0.1460	0.1530	0.0230	0.1070	
501	0.1120	0.1460	0.1530	0.1120	0.1070	
1,001	0.1460	0.1460	0.1530	0.1460	0.1070	
2,001	0.2150	0.1460	0.1530	0.2150	0.1070	
Above						

CUC notes that the average residential ratepayer uses approximately 500 kWh per month. The proposed rate adjustment will increase the average residential ratepayer's monthly electric bill by approximately \$6.87. For the lowest users, those customers who use approximately 250 kWh per month, the proposed rate increase will be \$4.87. Higher volume residential and commercial users will experience greater increases.

The Commission will conduct a public hearing on **Saturday, January 21, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.,** at the Retirement Fund Conference Room, located in the Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, to receive evidence, argument, discussion and public comment on the above regulatory matter. After the public hearing, the Commission may conduct a special business meeting to consider and make decisions regarding matters considered at the public hearing.

A set of the CUC rate case petitions, and the written testimony and the exhibits, is available for download from the internet as follows:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Type ftp.economists.com. Do not type "http://" or anything else, just ftp.economists.com.
3. Click on "Page" -- upper right corner of Internet Explorer window.
4. Click on "Open FTP Site in Windows Explorer".
5. An entry window will pop up. Enter user name: "Cucftp"; and password: "Cucsaiipan1". Both are case-sensitive.

A written copy of all petition materials will also be available for inspection at the following places: CUC Admin Office: Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building; CUC Tinian Office; CUC Rota Office.

Asia

NKorea media laud son, nation grieves Kim Jong Il



North Korean women cry after learning of the death of their leader Kim Jong Il on Monday, Dec. 19, 2011 in Pyongyang, North Korea. AP

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)—North Korea prepared to lay longtime ruler Kim Jong Il to rest while the hermit state's official media on Tuesday lauded his son and heir apparent as a person "born of heaven"—suggesting the transition to a new leadership was under way.

The streets of the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, were quiet Tuesday morning as thousands grieved the death of their "Dear Leader." With an 11-day mourning period in effect, flags flew at half staff, shops were closed and streams of mourners—some wailing—placed flowers at memorials around the city.

"Today, as well as yesterday, the

Korean people have been coming here to Mansu Hill in deep sorrow at the loss of the benevolent father of our nation with the infinite feeling of longing," said Ri Ho Il, a lecturer at the Korean Revolutionary History Museum. "Our General (Kim Jong Il) is our people's benevolent father. He defended our people's happiness, carrying on his forced march both night and day."

Kim died Saturday of a massive heart attack brought about by overwork and stress, according to the North's media. He was 69—though some experts question the official accounts of his birth date and location. The state funeral is to be held on Dec. 28. North

Korean officials say they will not invite foreign delegations and will allow no entertainment during the mourning period.

Kim's death and the possibility of a power struggle in a country armed with nuclear weapons and known for its unpredictability has heightened tensions in the region.

President Barack Obama agreed by phone with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak to closely monitor developments. Japan's government also said it was being vigilant for any "unexpected developments."

North Korean state media have given clear indications that Kim's third son will succeed him.

With morgues full, PH flood victims buried

ILIGAN, Philippines (AP)—With funeral parlors overwhelmed, authorities in a flood-stricken southern Philippine city on Monday organized the first mass burial of people who were swept to their deaths in one of worst calamities to strike the region in decades.

The official death toll from Friday night's disaster, spawned by a tropical storm, rose to 927. Benito Ramos, head of the Office of Civil Defense, said additional bodies were retrieved from the ocean.

The number of missing varied

widely. Official figures put the number at 82, while the Philippine Red Cross estimated 800.

The disparity underscores the difficulty in accounting for people who could be buried in the mud and debris littering much of the area or could be alive but lost in crowded evacuation centers or elsewhere.

"We lost count of how many are missing," said Ramos.

In Iligan, a coastal industrial hub of 330,000 people, Mayor Lawrence Cruz said the city's half dozen funeral parlors were full to capacity and no longer

accepting bodies. The first 50 or so unclaimed bodies were buried in individual tombs at the city cemetery, he said.

"For public health purposes, we're doing this. The bodies are decomposing and there is no place where we can place them, not in an enclosed building, not in a gymnasium," Cruz told The Associated Press.

He said many of the Iligan dead—279 by official count—"are just piled and laid outside the morgues," which ran out of formaldehyde for embalming and coffins.

violations. He has denied wrongdoing.

Japan to buy US F-35 fighters for air force

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's government on Tuesday selected the Lockheed Martin F-35 stealth fighter to bolster its aging air force, announcing it will buy a total of 42 aircraft under a multiyear deal. Japan has budgeted the cost of four fighters next fiscal year, which starts in April, said Noriyuki Shikata, deputy Cabinet secretary for public relations. Lockheed gave the average price per plane as \$65 million. Details including exact timing of the deliveries, final price tag and quantities per year have yet to be finalized.

World

Syria to allow Arab monitors, 100 dead in violence

BEIRUT (AP)—Syria agreed Monday to an Arab League plan to send foreign monitors, bowing to growing international pressure to end its bloody crackdown on a nine-month uprising. However the opposition saw the deal as a stalling tactic, especially given reports by activists that more than 100 people were killed on the same day.

Arab League chief Nabil Elaraby said in Cairo that an initial mission headed by one of his assistants will go to Syria within a day or two to discuss plans for 500 observers to eventually deploy around the country. He said they will be in small groups of at least 10 and each team will go to a different location.

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem rejected accusations the regime was trying to stall, even though it delayed the monitoring agreement for weeks.

"The signing of the protocol is the beginning of cooperation between us and the Arab League, and we will welcome

the Arab League observers," he told reporters in Damascus.

He said the observers will have a one-month mandate that can be extended by another month if both sides agree. The observers will be "free" in their movements and "under the protection of the Syrian government," he said. But they will not be allowed to visit sensitive military sites.

The Arab League plan calls for removing Syrian forces and heavy weapons from city streets, starting talks with opposition leaders and allowing human rights workers and journalists into the country, along with observers from member countries.

President Bashar Assad's regime accepted the monitors after Arab leaders warned they would turn to the U.N. Security Council to try to end the crackdown that the U.N. says has killed at least 5,000 people since March.

Pressure from Syria's longtime ally Russia clearly played a role in the decision

to allow observers.

Al-Moallem suggested that Damascus had agreed to sign on the advice of Russia, a veto-wielding member of the U.N. Security Council. Two months ago, Russia and China vetoed a Western-backed Security Council resolution condemning the bloodshed in Syria. But Moscow said last week it would work on a draft resolution at the U.N. that criticizes Syria for using disproportionate force against protesters.

The U.N. General Assembly on Monday condemned human rights violations by Assad's government, calling for an immediate end to violence and implementation of the Arab League plan "without further delay."

Violence has escalated in recent weeks in Syria with more frequent armed clashes between military defectors and security forces. The increasing militarization of the conflict has raised fears the country is sliding toward civil war.

EU fails to reach euro200 billion IMF loan target

BRUSSELS (AP)—European Union finance ministers have come up euro50 billion (\$65.19 billion) short of their goal of providing the International Monetary Fund with euro200 billion (\$260.78 billion) to help heavily indebted nations avoid default.

The eurozone will provide an extra euro150 billion to the IMF through bilateral loans, Jean-Claude Juncker, the prime minister of Luxembourg, who also chairs the meetings of the currency union's finance ministers, said in a statement Monday.

Greece, Ireland and Portugal, which have received multibillion euro bailouts, won't have to contribute to the IMF loans.

Of the non-euro countries, only Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic and Sweden will also send extra money to the Washington-based fund, Juncker said, without giving specific amounts. Poland had previously said it would

provide around euro6 billion, while Denmark has promised euro5.4 billion—underlining that the euro200 billion target will be missed.

The IMF welcomed the money late Monday. "We welcome the EU Finance Ministers' support for a substantial increase in the IMF's resources, as we work to strengthen our capacity to fulfill our systemic responsibilities to our global membership," a spokesperson said in a statement.

The failure to come up with the full amount that had been indicated at a summit of EU leaders just 10 days ago signals further rifts within the 27-country EU. At the summit, the 17 eurozone countries also agreed to set up a new treaty to create tighter fiscal rules for the currency union, which has been rocked by a debt crisis for the past two years.

The new accord was made

necessary after the United Kingdom blocked changes to the existing EU Treaty. Britain, the largest economy among the 10 non-euro countries in the EU, also declined to contribute to the euro200 billion IMF loan target. Its share would have amounted to some euro30 billion.

Instead, London signaled that it may provide more resources to the IMF through the Group of 20 framework, which most likely wouldn't be earmarked for the eurozone. "The U.K. has always been willing to consider further resources for the IMF, but for its global role and as part of a global agreement," the office of U.K. treasury chief George Osborne said in a statement.

The extra IMF loans are meant to be channeled into a special fund that will invest alongside the eurozone's own bailout fund—the European Financial Stability Facility.

WORLD BRIEFS

Iraq issues arrest warrant for Sunni VP

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraq's Shiite-led government issued an arrest warrant Monday for the Sunni vice president, accusing him of running a hit squad that assassinated government and security officials—extraordinary charges a day after the last U.S. troops left the country. The vice president, Tariq al-Hashemi, left Baghdad on Sunday for the semiautonomous Iraqi region of Kurdistan, presumably hoping that Kurdish authorities would not turn him in. Investigative judges banned him the same day from traveling outside of Iraq. The move against the country's highest-ranking Sunni official marked a sharp escalation in sectarian tensions, raising fears of a resurgence of large-scale bloodshed. Although many Iraqis welcomed the American withdrawal, ending the nine-year U.S. war, there are also considerable fears here that violence will worsen.

New president calls for Tunisia's Jews to return

TUNIS, Tunisia (AP)—Tunisia's newly elected president called Monday for the country's Jewish population to return, in statements carried by the state news agency. During a meeting with the country's Grand Rabbi Haim Bittan, President Moncef Marzouki said that Tunisia's Jews are full citizens and those that had left were welcome to return. His comments come almost two weeks after Israeli deputy Prime Minister Silvan Shalom called on the country's remaining Jews to emigrate to Israel. Tunisia presently has a Jewish population of 1,500, but in the 1960s there were 100,000. Most left following the 1967 war between Israel and Arab countries, and Socialist economic policies adopted by the government in the late 1960s also drove many Jewish business owners out of the country.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Filipino ex-general faces arrest over kidnappings

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Philippine court has ordered the arrest of a retired army general who has been accused of involvement in the kidnappings of two student activists. Malolos Regional Trial Court officer Melba David says a warrant of arrest against retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan covers the June 2006 abductions of University of the Philippines activists Karen Empeno and Sherlyn Cadapan. The two remain missing. David said Tuesday that Palparan will not be allowed to post bail. He is one of the highest ranking army officers facing arrest on rights

Focus

Mystery surrounds son set to succeed Kim Jong Il

By JEAN H. LEE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)—With the sudden death of his father, Kim Jong Un went from being North Korea's "Respected General" to "Great Successor"—a heady and uncertain promotion for a young man virtually unknown even to the North Korean people just a year ago.

Word of Kim Jong Il's death, announced Monday two days after he suffered a fatal heart attack, thrusts his 20-something son in the spotlight as the future head of a nation grappling with difficult nuclear negotiations and chronic food shortages.

Within hours of breaking the news of his father's death, state media urged the nation's people to rally around Kim Jong Un and to "faithfully revere" their next leader. The son has not appeared publicly since the announcement of his father's death.

The death speeds up a succession process that began in earnest a little more than a year ago—scant time to gain experience, build political clout and allay skepticism at home and abroad that he can lead a nation of 24 million. His father, by contrast, had 20 years of grooming before his father, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung, passed away in 1994.

News of Kim's death shocked a nation largely kept in the dark about their leader's health even after he suffered a stroke in 2008. Abroad, there was widespread speculation throughout 2009 about who would succeed the iron-fisted ruler.

Kim Jong Un's emergence in September 2010 as the anointed successor settled the question of which of Kim Jong Il's three known sons was chosen as the third-generation leader in a family dynasty that has ruled since North Korea's post-World War II inception in 1948.

And his status as his father's anointed successor has become clear over the course of the past year.

After appointing him vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Workers' Party, Kim Jong Il unveiled the son to the world just weeks later at a massive military parade to celebrate a key party anniversary.

With the world's media in attendance and transmitting live video, the young son appeared on the balcony of the Grand People's Study Hall in a blue suit, waving as tanks loaded with long-range missiles barreled by.

Since that first glimpse of the son, North Koreans have seen him regularly on state TV, in the Pyongyang Times newspaper and in the Korean Central News Agency as he accompanied his father on trips around the country.

Stocky and youthful, he bears more than a passing resemblance to his grandfather, Kim Il Sung, as a young man—a similarity that plays into the emphasis on lineage and legacy as just cause to make him leader.

He began appearing with his father at state events and reportedly ran the country when Kim traveled to Russia and China, and is credited at home with orchestrating a deadly November 2010 artillery attack on a front-line South

Korean island that nearly brought the foes to the brink of another war.

Kim Jong Il's leadership was defined by his "songun" policy of putting the powerful military first. Kim Jong Un's formal ascension will usher in a new era of leadership—but it remains to be seen what direction he will take the nation of 24 million people.

"It is impossible to say with certainty what his era will look like. Trying to anticipate the near future is tough enough," said Andray Abrahamian, executive director of the Choson Exchange, a Singapore-based nonprofit group that facilitates educational exchange with North Korea. "We expect greater caution and less willingness to try new things in the near term, making our programs more difficult to run. Things look like they're locking down already."

North Koreans have been told Kim Jong Un graduated from Kim Il Sung Military University; speaks several foreign languages, including English; and is a whiz at computing and technology.

But they have not been told much else.

He is said to celebrate his birthday in January, but the year—or even the name of his mother—have not been revealed publicly. Even his name,



In this Oct. 9, 2010 file photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, Kim Jong Un, the third son of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, applauds while watching the Arirang mass games performance staged to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea, in Pyongyang, North Korea.

better known elsewhere as digital technology.

In September, he spent hours at one of Pyongyang's showcase shops, a meat and fish shop on Pothongmun Street that sells whale meat, frozen quail and kielbasa, manager Ri Un Suk told The Associated Press in October.

His visit is proudly displayed on a plaque affixed to the wall, a tradition that until recently was reserved for his father and grandfather.

"He may be the future leader, but he's still a good son to his father," she said. "I was impressed by his loyalty as well as his wisdom."

A year ago, after he made his public debut, he was familiarly referred to as the "Young General."

In recent months, signs and plaques formally acknowledging him as the next leader began appearing with the title "Respected General."

On Monday, the state-run Korean Central News Agency called him the "Great Successor," and urged the people to rally around their next leader.

Kim Jong Un is expected to lean on members of his father's inner circle, including his aunt, Kim Jong Il's sister Kim Kyong Hui; her husband, Jang Song Thaek; and other Kim Jong Il confidants, experts said.

"Even though Kim Jong Un has been appointed as the successor, they may form a committee to rule the country at first," Yoon said. "His power succession is not completed yet."

There are concerns about instability due to his age and inexperience, said Narushige Michishita, an expert at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo.

But his age may win him backing among the young policymakers of his generation who have developed a taste for cell phones and computers, he said.

"Those people will be running the country in coming decades," Michishita said. "So in that sense we can expect some new things, but we don't know if that will result in political transformation."

Kim Jong Un is known to have studied for a few years in Switzerland as a teen and is believed to speak some German and French as well as English, though experts caution against thinking of him as reform-minded just because he lived in the West.

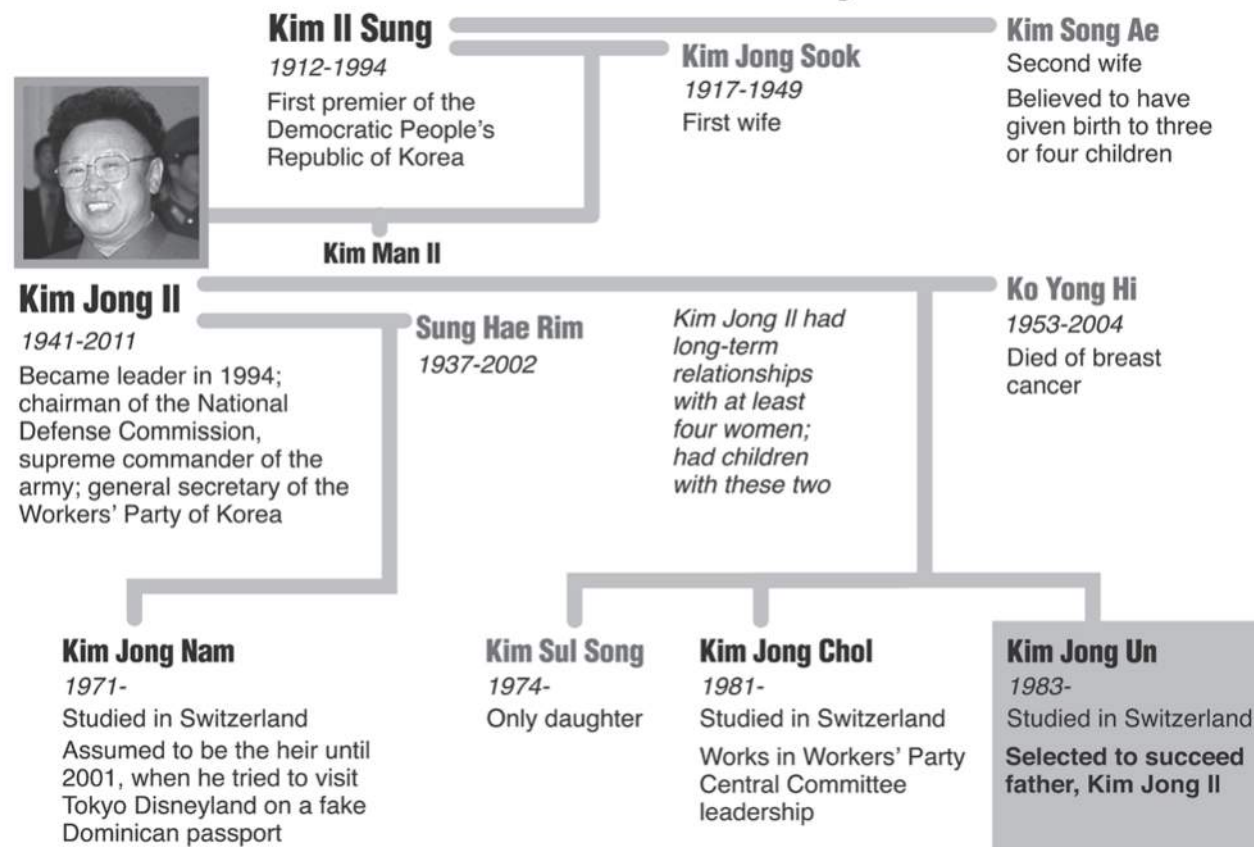
"I wouldn't draw huge conclusions from the fact that he spent a year or two in Europe as a boy," said John Delury, an assistant professor at Yonsei University's Graduate School of International Studies in South Korea. "But you know, he's significantly younger, and generational shifts happen no matter where you are in the world, including North Korea, so he is going to have a different orientation."

Apart from these few tantalizing details, much remains unknown about Jong Un or the real breadth of his power.

"There's much uncertainty," Yoon said. "Because we don't know who's really in charge."

Associated Press writers Alexa Olesen in Beijing, Malcolm Foster in Tokyo and Foster Klug in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

North Korea's secretive first family



Source: McClatchy Washington Bureau, BBC, Global Security, MCT Photo Service

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though whispered for years, was never published in state media until the announcement in September 2010 that he had been promoted to four-star general.

"There is a rumor that he is married, but officially we don't know," said Yoon Deok-ryong, who specializes in North Korean economic reform at the Korea Institute for International Economic

Policy in Seoul.

The visits have also provided hints

opened shops and factories churning out goods using digital technology have been favorite spots for a man said to like computers.

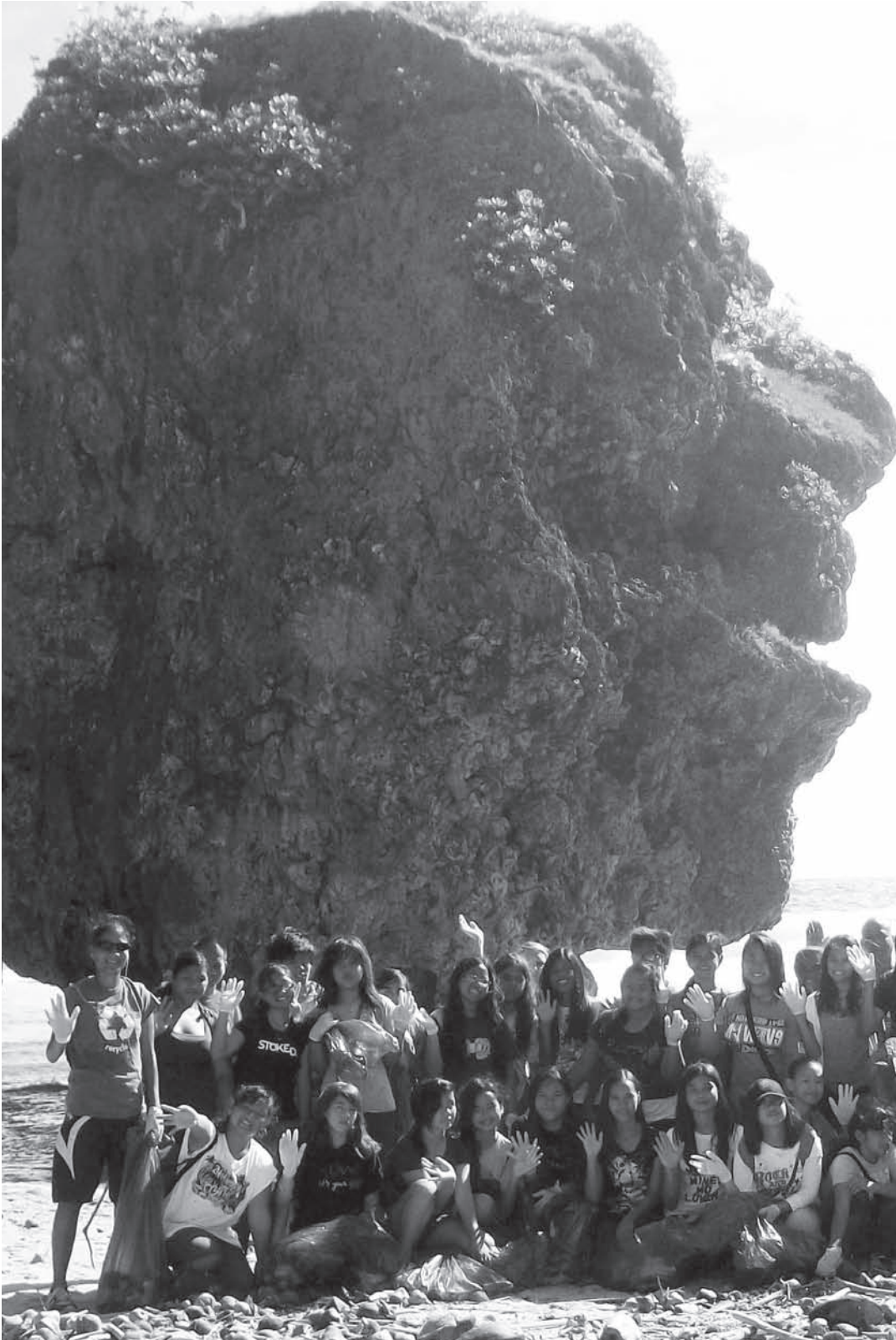
Two songs in vogue in Pyongyang are considered odes to Kim Jong Un: "Footsteps," an obvious reference to his role in carrying out his family's legacy, and "Song of CNC," or Computerized Numerical Control,

Even though Kim Jong Un has been appointed as the successor, they may form a committee to rule the country at first. His power succession is not completed yet.

to what areas Kim Jong Un may favor when he formally takes power. Newly

Campus Life

NMC hosts info session for government, private sector employees



The Northern Marianas College is inviting all government and private sector employees to a free information session on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2012, at the college's As Terlaje campus from 5:30pm to 6:30pm in Room D-1.

Attendees of this info session will receive information geared toward employees in the workforce who are interested in advancing their professional careers. The info session will cover the benefits of a college degree, NMC's accreditation status, the admissions process, and the benefits of starting at the Northern Marianas College. In addition, NMC will be discussing a new spring 2012 semester schedule, which includes more weekend and night classes in order to accommodate working individuals who are not able to attend classes during the workweek.

Financial aid options will also be discussed. For instance, the college offers a 50-percent discount on tuition for government employees who are ineligible to receive other scholarships.

Based on a study conducted by the US Census Bureau in 2004, people who have obtained at least an associate degree make close to \$10,000 more per annum than those who have only completed their high school education. That amount nearly doubles for a bachelor's degree and every other degree

that comes after that.

Faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs at NMC, as well as Student Services representatives from counseling, financial aid, and admissions will be on hand to answer questions. Other current students will also be speaking about their experiences at NMC.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis on elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), associate degrees in business, business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

Those who attend the information session will also qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for the upcoming spring 2012 semester. This represents a savings of about \$50. Registration for the spring 2012 semester will begin on Monday, Jan. 9, 2012. For more information, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at 234-5498 Ext. 1537, or log on to www.nmc-net.edu. (NMC)

MYWAVE BEACH CLEANUP

Hopwood Junior High School's MYWAVE Club joins the Division of Environmental Quality's Cleanup Brigade at Old Man by the Sea on Dec. 17 for the brigade's monthly cleanup. The beach was littered with flotsam and jetsam and, because the beach is accessible through a 25-minute trail, maintenance of this beach is not easy. The Marianas Tourism Education Council generously arranged transportation for 45 MYWAVE Club members and five advisers from the school campus to the site. In the photo are MYWAVE Club members, officers (Mikee Campo, president; Judy Ann Sanchez, VP; Amy Liu, VP; Krizel Manuzon, secretary; Joanne Liberato, secretary), and advisers Jenn Castro, Leandro Medrano, Connie Camacho, Tai Doram.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BEFORE



AFTER



The Old Man by the Sea beach "before" and "after" the cleanup on Dec. 17, 2011.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Life & Style

Lady Gaga voted AP Entertainer of the Year

NEW YORK (AP)—You might say that Lady Gaga's year really began in an egg.

That's how she arrived at the Grammys in February, encased in a large, translucent pod carried by scantily clad dancers. When she "hatched" onstage, she effectively gave birth to "Born This Way," performing the eponymous lead single of her second studio album and anthem to self-acceptance. In 2011, the album would carry her around the world, where she rarely went unnoticed.

After a year of extravagant globe-trotting and relentless advocacy of tolerance, Lady Gaga has been voted Entertainer of the Year by members of The Associated Press.

There were 135 ballots submitted by U.S. news organizations that make up the AP's membership. Editors and broadcasters were asked to cast their ballots for who had the most influence on entertainment and culture in 2011.

"I am humbled and honored to be named 'Entertainer of the Year' by The Associated Press," Lady Gaga said in a statement Monday signed "Mother Monster."

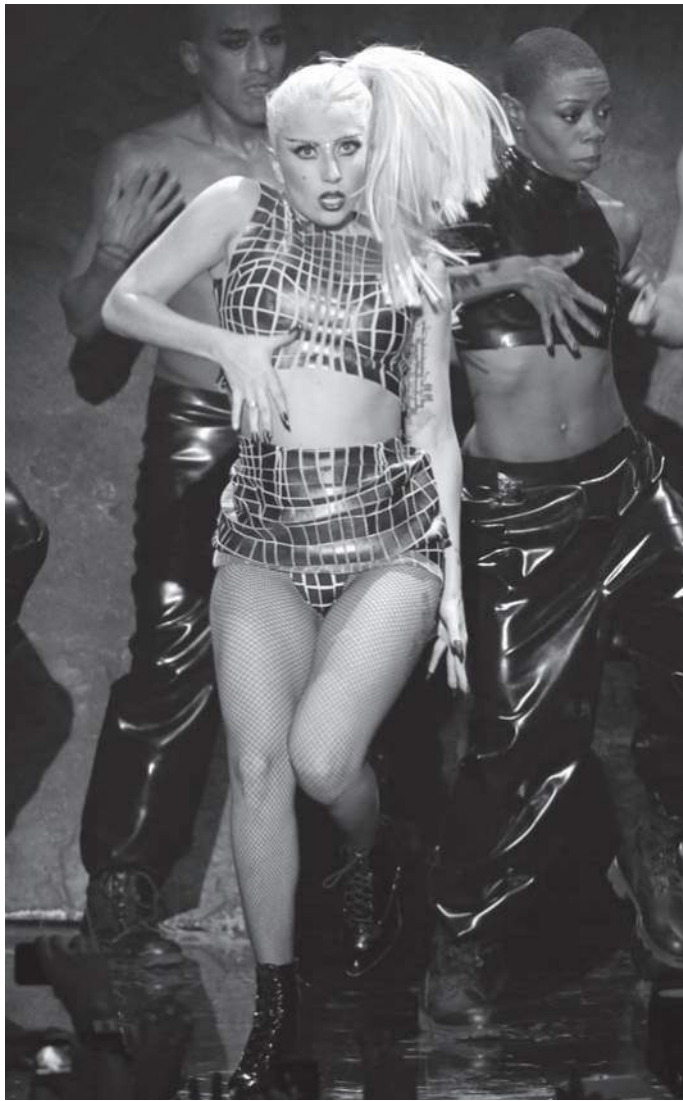
"My deepest gratitude to the broadcasters and journalists who've supported me over the years, and in turn, are now supporting the loves of my life: my fans. Thank you for believing in 'Born This Way.' May you continue to brave the dreams of Showbiz."

Lady Gaga narrowly edged out the late Apple founder Steve Jobs by three votes. Many others received numerous votes, including Taylor Swift, Charlie Sheen, Adele and the cast of "Harry Potter." Previous winners of the AP Entertainer of the Year include Betty White, Swift, Tina Fey and Stephen Colbert.

But it was Lady Gaga whose eminence in 2011 stood out most to voters. While accepting the best pop vocal album Grammy for her previous disc, "The Fame Monster," earlier this year, she said stardom was an adjustment for her.

"When I wrote 'Born This Way,' I imagined [Whitney Houston] was singing it because I wasn't secure enough in myself to imagine I was a superstar," she said.

When the album was released in May, 1.1 million copies sold in the first week, partly aided by a dramatic discount from Amazon, which sold it for 99 cents. But it was an industry-shattering moment because an extraordinary 60 percent of sales in the first week were digital downloads. Altogether, it outsold the next 42 albums on the Billboard chart combined. As of October,



worldwide sales had surpassed 8 million copies.

"One of my greatest artworks is the art of fame," the 25-year-old told "60 Minutes" earlier this year. "I'm a master of the art of fame."

Lady Gaga, whose real name is Stefani Germanotta, is prepping for a "Born This Way" tour. Her "Monster Ball Tour" was still going strong earlier this year, which went a long way toward making her, according to Forbes, the highest grossing female musician in 2011. The magazine, which compiled pre-tax income earned from May 2010 to May 2011, said Lady Gaga earned \$90 million.

Paul Pronovost, editor of the *Cape Cod Times*, called Lady Gaga's "A Very Gaga Thanksgiving"—a bizarre ABC holiday special hosted by the singer—"a brilliant reach to mainstream America."

"Transcendent performers like Lady Gaga come around as often as Halley's Comet," says

In this Nov. 6, 2011 file photo, Lady Gaga performs at the MTV European Music Awards 2011, in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Pronovost. "She has that rare gift of sophisticated self-promotion, so outlandish at times you just can't look away" and the talent to back it up. "This is Madonna 4.0."

The concerts spawned an HBO special, which was nominated for five Emmys Awards and won one. Lady Gaga was a regular presence at award shows throughout the year. She won three Grammys in February, including best female pop

vocal performance. She won two MTV Video Music Awards. She was recently nominated for three Grammys for next year's awards, including best album. This summer, her infamous meat dress—made of layers of Argentinian beef—was put on display at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

She visited the White House and appeared as the musical guest on "Saturday Night Live."

See LADY on Next Page

In Celebration of Her New Life †Remedio Diaz Camacho

Lovingly known as "Bedu" or "Remedion Celia"
Was called to her eternal rest on December 13, 2011 at the age of 78.

Her Memories Will Forever Live In The Hearts Of Her: Children And Their Families:

†Joseph C. Schardt (Children and grandchildren)
Eileen Mae C. Schardt
(Children and grandchild)
Glenn C. Schardt and Elizabeth C. Lizama
(Children and grandchildren)
Jeffrey Lee Camacho and Melina Benavente
(Children and grandchildren)

Brothers/ Sisters and In-laws:

†Daniel T. and Rosario Villagomez
†Roman T. and Cecilia M. Villagomez
†Jesus T. Villagomez
†Antonio T. and Remedio Villagomez
Francisco A. and Isabel V. Camacho
†Joaquin T. and Remedio A. Villagomez
†Jose T. and Magdalena T. Villagomez
Frances Sintkoski

In Her New Life, She Now Joins Her:

Mother: Sinforosa Celia Diaz Camacho
Grandchildren: Joseph Schardt Jr. and Lee Troy Camacho

She will be missed by numerous family and friends.

Daily Mass of Intentions is being celebrated each evening at 6:00pm. at San Vicente Church. Funeral services will be held on Friday, December 23, 2011. Her remains will be at Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel beginning at 7:30am. Rosary will be recited at the same time and Responso will be at 8:30am. Her remains will be escorted to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 8:45am and Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 9:00am. Interment service will follow at Mt. Carmel Cemetery where she will be at a peaceful rest. Please join us in prayers,

Thank You — Si Yuus Maase
Children and Family

In Loving Memory of
† Pedro Limes Norita
May 17, 1961 – December 14, 2011

In his new life, he now joins his:
Parents: Pedro N. Norita and Victorina L. Norita
Parents In-Laws: Jesus Betmag and Mariana G. Rutinag
Brothers: Manuel L. Norita and David L. Norita
In-Laws: Mathias D. Mahora and Estella I. Norita

He will be greatly missed by his:
Wife: Linda Ruweet Norita
Children: Manuel R. Norita, Mark Anthony Norita, Kanice R. Norita, David R. Norita, Ramon R./Roselina Leegrurw Norita (Pearly)

Brothers, Sisters and In-Laws: †Manuel L. & †Estella I. Norita (Jeffrey/Emmy and children, Jason, Jesus, Floreenda/David Cypriano and daughter); Virginia N. Mahora (Esther, Al/Leslie and children, Paula/Jonas and children, Mathias and children); Vicente L. & Sylveria C. Norita (Zeniva, Benjamin, Shauna, Victorino, Rufina, Richard & Monica); Donald L. Norita (Gabby C. Norita); Remedio L. Norita (Leonard, Anna & Erwin Jr.); Consolacion N. & Alvin C. Cepeda (Arrian/Robert and children, Victoria, Jaedyn, Alvonnay & Segundo); Dina Ellen N. & Nolas N. Kaliga (Travis Jude)

He is additionally survived by his numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, extended families & friends.

Nightly rosary is being said at 7:00p.m. at Santa Remedio Church in Tanapag.

On Thursday, December 22, 2011 his body will be escorted from Borja Funeral Home to Santa Remedio Church in Tanapag at 7:30 a.m. for viewing and last respects. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 a.m. followed immediately by interment service at the Tanapag Public Cemetery.

Your thoughts and prayers will be greatly appreciated

Thank You — Si Yu'us Ma'ase
Ginen I Familia

Death & Funeral Announcement
Francis Kin Wong
March 10, 1955 – December 16, 2011

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:
Wife: Xu Qiong Wong
First Wife: Zhang Ping Wong
Son: Eddie Wong

This is to inform the relatives and friends that Francis Kin Wong has passed away on December 16, 2011 at the Commonwealth Health Center in Saipan.

On Thursday, December 22, 2011 viewing and last respects will be held at the CHC Morgue from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. His body will be immediately escorted to Tanapag Public Cemetery for burial service.

Your thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

Thank You

The Family

The European-American adventure of 'Tintin'

By RAFAEL GUZMAN
NEWSDAY

NEW YORK—The first motion-capture project directed by Steven Spielberg, "The Adventures of Tintin," is shaping up as one of the year's biggest movie events. Its production budget—split between two studios, Paramount and Sony—reportedly amounts to \$250 million, with another \$100 million spent on marketing and distribution. And its Wednesday release gives it a high-profile head start on the Christmas week-end's glut of competition.

So where did this potential blockbuster hold its premiere in October? Not Los Angeles. Not New York. Not even America.

"We premiered the film in Belgium and France," Spielberg said on a visit to Manhattan the week-end before last. "We knew that our worst critics, if there were going to be a horrible public outcry against us, were going to come from Belgium and France. So that



was the first thing we did."

Outcry? Why would a family-friendly action-adventure film require shuttle diplomacy? One reason is that Tintin, a globe-trotting young sleuth created by Belgian author-illustrator Hergé (the pen name of Georges Remi), first appeared as a comic strip in

a French-language newspaper in 1929 and went on to appear in 23 books that have sold more than 200 million copies in at least 50 languages. In Europe in particular, the odd-looking fellow with the tuft of ginger hair is one of the most treasured and iconic figures of the modern era.

"People learn to read through Tintin—it's that kind of level," says Jamie Bell, the British actor who plays the character in the film. "It's built into the mainframe culture through learning, through education, but also through the parents. This is a generational character."

Larsson's partner chides 'Dragon Tattoo' marketing

STOCKHOLM (AP)—The longtime partner of late Swedish crime writer Stieg Larsson says he wouldn't have approved of merchandise being linked to this week's release of a Hollywood adaptation of his bestselling novel, "The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo."

Eva Gabrielsson said Monday that Larsson would have instead used the buzz around his work to call attention to violence and discrimination against women.

"We would never have sold any rights for merchandising," Gabrielsson said. "It has nothing to do with books."

H&M has released a Dragon Tattoo Collection, created by costume designer Trish Summerville, that it says is inspired by Lisbeth Salander—the tattooed anti-heroine of Larsson's books and the film which opens Wednesday in the United States.

Gabrielsson and Larsson were a couple for more than 30 years, but never married. Larsson didn't leave a will, so his brother and father inherited the rights to his works when he died of a heart attack at age 50 in 2004.

The two have rejected Gabrielsson's suggestions that they are using Larsson's legacy for profit, and say they will donate their earnings to causes he supported, including an anti-racism magazine that he worked for as a journalist.

Still, Gabrielsson expressed concern that the political dimension of Larsson's books, including the feminist undertones, would be overlooked by the film's hype. She claims Larsson wanted to show that gender

imbalances exist even in Sweden, one of the world's most egalitarian societies.

"The oppression of women exists everywhere, this incomprehensible discrimination," she said.

In Larsson's trilogy, Salander and journalist Mikael Blomqvist team up to solve serial killings and sex trafficking scandals. Rooney Mara plays Salander and Daniel Craig plays Blomqvist in the David Fincher directed film.

Mara suggested at a news conference last month that Salander isn't a feminist, and doesn't see herself as part of any group or subculture.

"Does she know what film she has been in?" Gabrielsson said, disbelievingly. "Has she

read the books? Has she not had any coaching?"

Salander doesn't fit neatly into any category, "but she is still part of a movement," Gabrielsson said. "Her entire being represents a resistance, an active resistance to the mechanisms that mean women don't advance in this world and in worst case scenarios are abused like she was."

Gabrielsson said the feminist theme had been partly lost with the creation of the English title, which she thinks sounds like "a children's book."

She said the original Swedish title is "Man som hatar kvinnor,"—men who hate women. "In his (Larsson's) world that was also the basic theme for these books," she said.

Gabrielsson published her own book last year about her life with Larsson.



Gabrielsson

Former Miss Venezuela dies of breast cancer at 28

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—Former Miss Venezuela Eva Ekvall, whose struggle with breast cancer was closely followed by Venezuelans, has died at age 28.

Her family said Ekvall died Saturday at a hospital in Houston.

Ekvall was crowned Miss Venezuela at age 17 in 2000, and the following year she was third runner-up in the Miss Universe pageant in Puerto Rico. She went on to work as a model, actress and television news anchor.

She also authored a book, "Fuera de Foco" ("Out of Focus"), about her struggle with cancer, which included images by Venezuelan photographer Roberto Mata.

She told the newspaper El Nacional in an interview last year after the book was published that "I needed to send the message of the need for cancer prevention."



In this May 11, 2001 file photo, Miss Venezuela Eva Ekvall stands with other contestants, unseen, as they wait for the announcement of the winner of Miss Universe in Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

On the cover was a portrait in which she appeared with makeup and her head shaved. The book also included images of her while going through chemotherapy.

"I hate to see photos in which I come out ugly," Ekvall told El Nacional. "But you know what? Nobody ever said cancer is pretty or that I should look like Miss Venezuela when I have cancer."

At the time, she was hopeful of overcoming cancer and wanted to write more.

Ekvall's family said in a statement Sunday that her remains were being cremated in Houston on Monday and that a service is to be held in Venezuela once her remains are returned to the country.

Ekvall said in a 2007 interview published in Venezuelan news media that although her mother is Jamaican and her father is American of Swedish and

Hungarian descent, "I feel more Venezuelan than anybody."

She was married to radio producer John Fabio Bermudez and had a 2-year-old daughter.

In her book, Ekvall had described her joy at the birth of her daughter saying "that happiness, although (the daughter) may not know it or understand it, keeps me alive today."

Her death brought an outpouring of condolences from Venezuelans, including from some prominent artists and politicians who praised her in messages on Twitter.

One drawing posted online depicted her as an angel with white wings and a pink ribbon on her chest.

Ekvall's husband posted a photo on Twitter Sunday showing a close-up of his hand holding hers, resting on a bed, with the words "Always together ... I love you wife."

Yet even after more than 80 years, Tintin has never quite cracked America. "The States can be a bit insular, and in 'Tintin' you basically travel all over the planet," said Francois Lauzon, a self-described Tintinologist and a writer-editor for the Montreal Gazette. "Or maybe it's the fact that the character was a bit too French for Americans. He looks funny."

Spielberg's film would seem to translate into any language. It's an old-fashioned mystery involving a sunken ship, a 17th century scroll, a nefarious treasure hunter named Sakharine (Daniel Craig) and the boozy but lionhearted Captain Haddock (Andy Serkis). Fans of the books will recognize other characters, like the unflappable butler Nestor, the opera-diva Bianca Castafiore and, of course, Tintin's faithful terrier, Snowy.

Still, the negative reactions Spielberg worried about did come from some corners. In England, which also embraces Tintin as its own, early reviews were harsh. Tom McCarthy, author of the book "Tintin and the Secret of Literature," called the film "an assault on a great body of art," while a critic at London's Guardian newspaper likened Spielberg's adaptation to "a rape." Other judgments ranged from "a kind of airless pastiche" to "painful."

Despite all that, "The Adventures of Tintin" rocketed to No. 1 at the overseas box office in November, pulling in \$56.1 million in 19 territories, according to Box Office Mojo. In France, it became the highest-opening nonsequel film ever.

Spielberg clearly takes satisfaction in this. The public response "just drowned out the few criticisms," he said, sitting in his

Manhattan hotel room with his feet jauntily perched on a coffee table. "And I think they were just totally shouted down by thousands, and now millions, of fans overseas that basically ignored the few carping critics."

The movie has been on Spielberg's mind since at least 1981, when he noticed that French reviews of "Raiders of the Lost Ark" consistently mentioned Tintin. Intrigued, Spielberg sought out the books and discovered what were essentially little movies, drawn in Hergé's distinctively bright, clean style.

In 1983, not long after Hergé's death, Spielberg met with the author's widow and secured the film rights to Tintin. (One early casting idea: Walter Matthau as the irascible Captain Haddock.)

Decades passed while Spielberg searched for a workable script (the current film combines three Tintin books, leaning heavily on 1943's "The Secret of the Unicorn"), and the project languished for some time. But in 2004, Spielberg found new inspiration in an unlikely place: "The Polar Express," Robert Zemeckis' pioneering but widely reviled motion-capture experiment, which still remains emblematic of the format's worst shortcomings, particularly the notorious glassy "deadeye" problem.

"I saw that if the technology develops beyond the nascent brilliance of the first mo-cap movie ever made, this may be the medium to convey the right message to honor Hergé's illustrations," Spielberg said. His instincts were validated while hanging out on the set of James Cameron's "Avatar," the top-grossing film of all time.

LADY

From Page 19

She performed at former President Bill Clinton's 65th-birthday bash with an ode to Marilyn Monroe. She remained the person most followed on Twitter, with more than 17 million Little Monsters—or more people who live in Greece and Ireland combined. And for the mark of true fame, she was parodied by Weird Al Yankovic, who turned "Born This Way" into "Perform This Way."

She collaborated with a number of music legends, including Elton John ("Hello, Hello" for "Gnomeo & Juliet"), Tony Bennett ("The Lady Is a Tramp") and Cher ("The Greatest Thing"). She continually released ambitious videos, most recently the 13-minute epic "Marry the Night." It had 5 million views in less than 48 hours.

"She gets people talking," says Greg Retsinas, digital director of the Press Democrat of Santa Rosa, Calif. "She's a polarizing figure not just in music and fashion but in pop culture and society. In a recent week, I heard her referenced person-

ally by my 9-year-old daughter, a prominent local CFO and an airline pilot, all glowingly."

With the help of the MacArthur Foundation and Harvard University, Lady Gaga also founded the Born This Way Foundation, a nonprofit focusing on youth empowerment and "issues like self-confidence, well-being, anti-bullying, mentoring and career development." She has spoken frequently about such issues. At EuroPride, a gay pride concert in Rome in June, she said, "We beckon for compassion, understanding and above all we want full equality now."

"I am a child of diversity," she said. "I am one with my generation."

Lady Gaga will be ringing in the New Year with typical showmanship. She'll be the featured guest on Dick Clark's annual "New Year's Rockin' Eve" special from New York City's Times Square. Meanwhile, Christmas shoppers can walk through the holiday display she designed at Barney's in New York: 5,500 square feet of bright colors, crazy shapes and a gigantic cartoon statue of the superstar herself.

Howard Stern 'will shake up America's Got Talent'

By SCOTT COLLINS
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Howard Stern is going to have some more company on the "America's Got Talent" judging table.

The shock jock's hiring announced last week is just part of a total makeover for the NBC summer hit, including a yet-to-be picked fourth judge, according to creator and executive producer Simon Cowell. Stern, who joins Sharon Osbourne and Howie Mandel, will replace British host Piers Morgan, who left to focus on his CNN talk show.

"Having two Brits and one American on 'America's Got Talent' actually was ridiculous in hindsight," Cowell said in a weekend interview with Show Tracker. "I want to bring on a fourth judge as well, definitely an American. And I want somebody who understands what a Vegas crowd would pay good money to judge."

Cowell has been unhappy that "AGT" hasn't created more stars like 11-year-old classical singer Jackie Evancho. "I don't think the show over the years has done a good enough



Howard Stern is photographed at the world premiere of "Legally Blonde II," in New York on Saturday, June 28, 2003.

job at finding what I would have liked," he said. "The ratio between hit and miss, it's not good enough at the moment."

"I hope that with Howard's name—and we'll see what his skill set is like—you can spot that little diamond and help turn them into a star. I don't think the judges have done enough in the past at actually assisting them in the next rounds. ...We've got to change that."

"It's all gotten a little too safe, too predictable," Cowell added. "It all needs a shakeup."

Stern has seldom been accused of being too safe, what with his obsessions with sex and bodily functions and in-depth interviews with porn stars. But Cowell says Stern won't be quite as outrageous as some fans (and detractors) might expect.

"He can't," Cowell said. "He knows the rules. Will he be controversial? Yes, because he's Howard Stern. He thinks he can do a better job than the people currently doing it."

"I love the fact that he's survived all these decades," Cowell added. "He really understands what Americans like and he's not afraid."

Man dreads holiday events that won't be very merry

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



DEAR ABBY: I'm a 25-year-old guy with a unique problem. My father has been dating a woman since I was 16 who has a daughter my age named "Emma." Over the years Emma and I became good friends -- then more than that. We hooked up a few times. About a year ago, I told her I had developed feelings for her, which drove her off pretty fast. We haven't talked since. She now lives in another state with her boyfriend, and I'm happy for her.

With the holidays here, Dad expects me to go to all of the events and get-togethers. I made up excuses last year to avoid them, but don't think I can do that again. I want to escape the awkward interaction with Emma and her boyfriend because I still have feelings for her. I don't want to disappoint Dad, but I don't know how to handle this. Help, please.

Dear Abby

RUNNING FROM THE HOLIDAYS

DEAR RUNNING: You don't have to attend "all" the events and get-togethers, but you should attend a few. When you do, consider bringing a friend with you and minimizing the contact you have with Emma and her boyfriend. Observe the social amenities, keep the conversation brief and casual, and concentrate on the rest of the family.

While the initial contact may be painful, this is no different than any other romance that didn't work out. The awkwardness will pass if you concentrate on something else.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have been living with my daughter and her family for two years because I lost my job. I don't pay rent, but help out with the utilities and buy my own groceries. I also baby-sit for them several days a week. The only money I have is an inheritance my father left me to live on, and it is dissipating quickly.

I have met a man and have fallen in love with him. I plan to move in with him soon. The problem is my daughter and son-in-law owe me money. They promised it would be repaid, but when I ask when, they give me the run-around. (They always have money for tattoos, movies and concerts, though.) They also expect me to baby-sit for them on weekends, but that's the only time I can see my boyfriend.

How do I tell them I want to live my own life? I want to be free and not have to worry about them needing me to baby-sit and making me feel guilty about it. I'm afraid they'll say that because I lived with them, they no longer owe me the money. I don't know how to tell them without it turning ugly. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

FRUSTRATED IN K.C., MO.

DEAR FRUSTRATED: I presume your daughter and son-in-law have met your boyfriend? Announce the good news that you will be living with him; it shouldn't be shocking. Ask again for the money that they owe you. Be pleasant, but firm, and don't let it escalate into an argument. If they say they don't have it, ask them to sign (and date) a note promising to repay it at a later date. That will be your proof that a loan was extended. If they refuse, with no proof that you loaned them money, you won't have leverage to force them to pay up.

As for the baby-sitting, do it when it's convenient for you. If they want their "freedom" on some weekends, let them pay you instead of a sitter and work off part of their obligation that way. But insist on cash.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Paul McCartney releasing an album of standards

NEW YORK (AP)—Paul McCartney is releasing an album of standards—plus two new songs of his own.

The former Beatle announced Monday that his new disc will be

out on Feb. 7. It doesn't have a title yet. He's already streaming one song, "My Valentine," on his website.

McCartney says he and John Lennon were inspired in their

own writing by some of the standards. Some of them he first heard when his father performed them at home on piano.

Eric Clapton and Stevie Wonder make appearances on the

disc, which was recorded with Diana Krall and her band.

McCartney says he's been thinking about the project for 20 years and, at age 69, figured "if I don't do it now, I'll never do it."

Katy Perry's No. 1 'Dream'

By GLENN GAMBOA
NEWSDAY

NEW YORK—Katy Perry is pulling out all the stops to make her "Teenage Dream" a record-setting reality.

Perry and Michael Jackson are the only artists ever to land five No. 1 singles from the same album. However, Perry has a shot to land a sixth chart-topper with her latest single, "The One That Got Away," which has climbed to No. 9 on Billboard's charts.

In an effort to boost the song's chances of reaching No. 1, Perry's record company put "The One That Got Away" on sale for

69 cents, instead of the usual \$1.29, trying to capitalize on Perry's hosting duties on "Saturday Night Live" last week. Some will call foul if she lands the top spot after the price cut, much like some criticized her move of releasing a remix of "Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)," which featured Missy Elliott, just as it looked like the track might come up short.

Of course, her first three "Teenage Dream" singles—"California Gurls," "Teenage Dream" and "Firework"—needed no help to

Katy Perry, right, performs at the HP Pavilion in San Jose, California, on Friday, August 12, 2011.



SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Lange, Shepard separate after nearly 30 years

NEW YORK (AP)—Jessica Lange and Sam Shepard have separated after nearly 30 years together. A publicist for Lange confirmed the split Monday. People magazine first reported the separation, saying the actors concluded their relationship almost two years ago. The 62-year-old Lange and the 68-year-old Shepard had been together since 1982. They have two grown children together. Lange won Oscars for her roles in "Tootsie" and "Blue Sky." She's starring in the FX series "American Horror Story." She was nominated for a Golden Globe last week. Shepard recently starred as Butch Cassidy in the film "Blackthorn." He also is a playwright and author whose play "Buried Child" won a Pulitzer Prize. Lange previously was married to ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov. Shepard previously was married to actress O-Lan Jones.

Czechs find 4 stolen paintings by Emil Filla

PRAGUE (AP)—Czech police say they have found four valuable paintings by Czech cubist artist Emil Filla that were stolen last month from a northwestern gallery, and six suspects

have been arrested in the case. The paintings—"Still Life With a Fruit Basket and Clarinet," "Woman with Picture Cards," "Still Life with a Fruit Bowl" and "Blind Man"—were stolen Nov. 18 from the Peruc Chateau, which hosts a permanent exhibition of Filla's work. Filla painted the pieces after the World War II when he spent several years at the place. He died in 1953. The owners estimate their value at tens of millions of koruna (several million dollars). Police declined to give more details Monday, citing an ongoing investigation.

NY man gets 1 year in prison for 'X-Men' piracy

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A New York man has been sentenced to a year in federal prison for illegally uploading and distributing a copy of "X-Men Origins: Wolverine" before the movie's premiere. Forty-nine-year-old Gilberto Sanchez was sentenced Monday in Los Angeles federal court. The judge also imposed a year of supervised release and numerous computer restrictions. Sanchez pleaded guilty in March to one count of uploading a copyrighted work being prepared for commercial distribution. Prosecutors say he admitted uploading a "workprint" copy of the 2009 film about one month before

it was released in theaters, then publicizing the upload on two websites. Prosecutors said in court documents that the film proliferated like wildfire throughout the Internet, resulting in up to millions of infringements. Sanchez has a prior conviction for a similar offense.

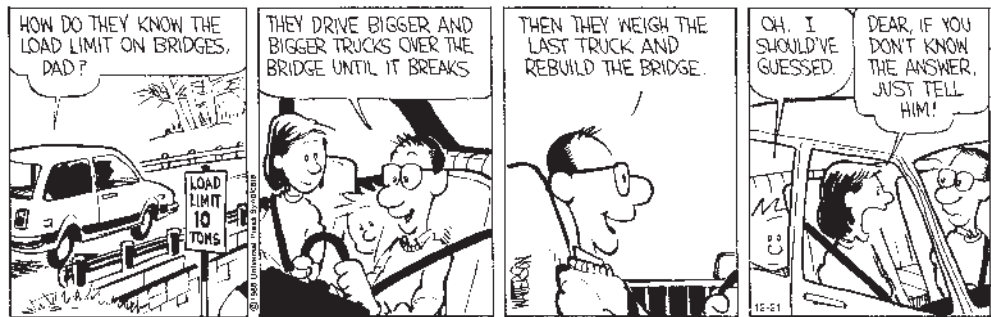
Penn, McDormand, Giamatti join Sundance cast list

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Films featuring Sean Penn, Frances McDormand, Paul Giamatti, Jesse Eisenberg, Tracy Morgan and Melissa Leo are among late additions to next month's Sundance Film Festival. Organizers for Robert Redford's independent-film showcase said Monday they have added four titles to the previously announced lineup of more than 100 movies. The new films are: director Paolo Sorrentino's rock-star-on-a-road-trip tale "This Must Be the Place," with Penn and McDormand; Philip Dorling and Ron Nyswaner's "Predisposed," with Eisenberg, Leo and Morgan in a comic romp about a piano prodigy, his troubled mom and a drug dealer; Don Coscarelli's horror comedy "John Dies at the End," featuring Giamatti; and Joachim Trier's "Oslo, August 31st," a drama about a Norwegian man in crisis. The festival runs Jan. 19-29 in Park City, Utah.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



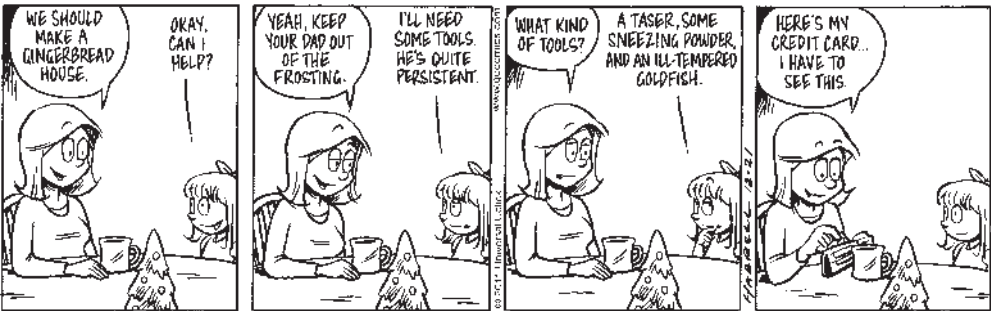
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



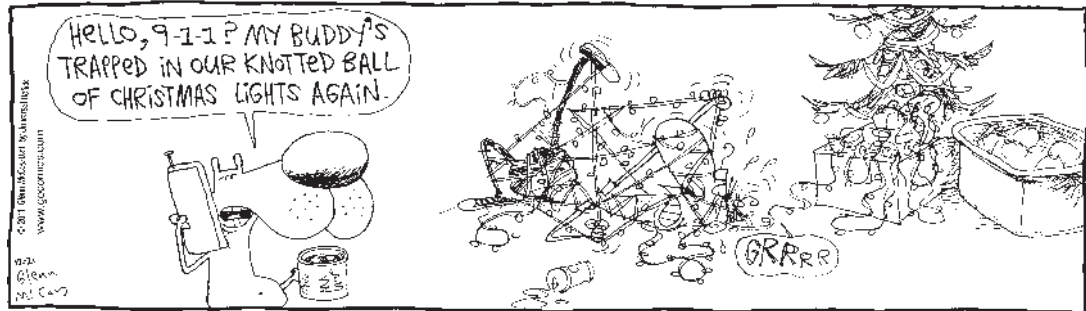
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

43 Rules, for short

44 Have

46 Cowboy's greeting

50 1984 movie remade in 2011

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11 Doubtful

12 Catch a glimpse of

17 Jazz style

19 A Bobbsey twin

22 Dire prophecy

23 Titanic VIP

25 Start over

26 Red and Black

27 Lip

28 Diagonal

29 Press on

30 Harvest

31 Coastal flier

35 Highbrow

38 Hooligan

40 Bear, in Barcelona

42 Piercing tool

45 Biblical boatwright

47 Finish a film shoot

48 Clinton's 1996 opponent

49 Shriek bark

50 Media watchdog org.

51 Reaction to fireworks

52 Eggs in a lab

53 Raw rock

54 Round Table address

Solution time: 21 mins.

EPIC EDGE SUP
MICA TFFM PRO
SPECTACLE EGO
TAIR RACER
GASUP BALI
RIPS SKILIFTS
ADEPLEADIRA
SECTIONSDIUS
IONE SIDES
GIMMELAMA
ODESPECULATE
TEN AHEMUNIT
HAS PIKE PATH

Yesterday's answer 12-21

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13					14		
15			16				17			
18			19			20				
		21		22	23	24		25	26	27
28	29	30				31		32		
33			34			35		36		
37		38		39				40		
41			42		43					
		44		45		46		47	48	49
50	51	52			53	54		55		
56				57				58		
59				60				61		

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kiefer Sutherland, 45; Ray Romano, 54; Samuel L. Jackson, 63; Jane Fonda, 74.

Happy Birthday: Go the distance. If you need more qualifications, do what it takes to get them. Change the dynamics of your personal and professional life. Consider a move if necessary. There is no room for negativity if you want to make a difference in your life or the lives of others. Serious attempts will bring monumental results. Your numbers are 7, 10, 24, 27, 33, 38, 44.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Doing extra work will make you feel better about taking time off. Venturing to other parts of the country or visiting family or friends should be considered. Don't let someone's uncertainty stop you from following through with your plans. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Emotional matters will surface if you or someone you are with overindulges and overreacts. Concentrate on whatever chores you have to complete before the end of the year. Don't get involved in an argument you cannot win. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Be honest regarding your feelings or you may get caught in a sticky situation. Someone from your past is likely to contact you, looking for the go-ahead to waltz back into your life. Don't lead anyone on. ***

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Your prime concern should be to enjoy friends, family and the people you love most. Shopping will lead to temptation and

added stress. Keep in mind that you cannot buy love. Your time and thoughtfulness are all that's required. *****

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Strive to reach your goals before the year comes to a close. Be realistic about what you can and cannot afford. Face responsibility head-on and do your best to let your positive attitude diminish any negative influences. **

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Confusion while traveling will slow things down. Someone will misinform you. Anger isn't the answer. Pick yourself up and do your best to reach your goals or destination. The end result will be fortunate. ****

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Pay off old debts or take care of unfinished business you don't want to carry into the new year. Talks will lead to an agreement if you are straightforward about what you want. Don't bully or let anyone bully you. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A positive approach to whatever you do or whoever you are dealing with will bring the best results. Say what's on your mind and reveal what your intentions are. Overindulgence must be avoided emotionally, financially and physically. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't trust anyone trying to talk you out of your cash. If something is over budget, decline. You have to protect your assets if you want to head into the new year with less stress and a good financial plan. ***

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): A compassionate approach towards the people you work with or for will help ease any tension that has been affecting your relationship. Offer suggestions or put in extra hours. What you do above and beyond the call of duty will be impressive. ****

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Put your emotions on the backburner and think. You will come up with some good ideas that will save the day and position you well for future projects. A change in your personal life will bring you great joy. **

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Put more emphasis on your finances and less on trying to win favors or buy love at the cost of going into debt. Last-minute purchases should be avoided. Spending time with the people you love will be more beneficial in the end. *****

Birthday Baby: You are a doer. You fight for what's right. You back your convictions.

Eugenia's Web sites: eugenialast.com for confidential consultations, myspace.com/eugenialast for Eugenia's blog, astroadvice.com for fun

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

		1	6			7	4	2	3	
8			2		1				6	
2			4						8	
7			3						5	
	8	5	1					6		
			8					9		
			7			1				
			9			6				
4	3					5				

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/21 ©2010 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	9	7	1	3	8	4	6	2
2	8	4	6	7	5	3	1	9
3	1	6	4	9	2	8	5	7
1	5	3	7	4	6	2	9	8
7	4	2	8	1	9	6	3	5
9	6	8	2	5	3	1	7	4
6	2	1	5	8	7	9	4	3
8	3	5	9	6	4	7	2	1
4	7	9	3	2	1	5	8	6

Difficulty Level ** 12/21

WONDERWORD By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WEDDING ALBUMS Solution: 11 letters

SCYSSKO OBCLOBMYS
RHONVESROLOCOFP
SEPLOAERUTPACSE
RRMALLMLPSEMEHTC
EIOEREEUSUEDENI
VSNVMGCREATIVEA
EHSGABOTEMKFDML
RYPFRSFETICAENOT
ORXRALRROOERIMR
FONBEEEMOHNGFEE
BVRGASYSIDISPLAYS
EIASIWEIVRTRAMN
CNUZBSGROOMSILI
TREVOCEOVEMOUNT
EUQUINUFDSIEDIRBT

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Books, Box, Brides, Capture, Ceremony, Cherish, Collection, Colors, Cover, Creative, Design, Display, Elegant, Fabric, Favors, Find, Forever, Frame, Grooms, Home, Image, Insert, Ivory, Keepsake, Moments, Mount, Photographs, Preserve, Print, Proof, Remember, Rings, Size, Special, Suede, Symbol, Themes, Treasure, Unique, Value, View, Years

Yesterday's Answer: Saying

Tuesday's puzzle: starting with a ring (a) b (a) c (a) d (a) e (a) f (a) g (a) h (a) i (a) j (a) k (a) l (a) m (a) n (a) o (a) p (a) q (a) r (a) s (a) t (a) u (a) v (a) w (a) x (a) y (a) z (a) 0 (a) 1 (a) 2 (a) 3 (a) 4 (a) 5 (a) 6 (a) 7 (a) 8 (a) 9 (a) 10 (a) 11 (a) 12 (a) 13 (a) 14 (a) 15 (a) 16 (a) 17 (a) 18 (a) 19 (a) 20 (a) 21 (a) 22 (a) 23 (a) 24 (a) 25 (a) 26 (a) 27 (a) 28 (a) 29 (a) 30 (a) 31 (a) 32 (a) 33 (a) 34 (a) 35 (a) 36 (a) 37 (a) 38 (a) 39 (a) 40 (a) 41 (a) 42 (a) 43 (a) 44 (a) 45 (a) 46 (a) 47 (a) 48 (a) 49 (a) 50 (a) 51 (a) 52 (a) 53 (a) 54 (a) 55 (a) 56 (a) 57 (a) 58 (a) 59 (a) 60 (a) 61 (a) 62 (a) 63 (a) 64 (a) 65 (a) 66 (a) 67 (a) 68 (a) 69 (a) 70 (a) 71 (a) 72 (a) 73 (a) 74 (a) 75 (a) 76 (a) 77 (a) 78 (a) 79 (a) 80 (a) 81 (a) 82 (a) 83 (a) 84 (a) 85 (a) 86 (a) 87 (a) 88 (a) 89 (a) 90 (a) 91 (a) 92 (a) 93 (a) 94 (a) 95 (a) 96 (a) 97 (a) 98 (a) 99 (a) 100 (a) 101 (a) 102 (a) 103 (a) 104 (a) 105 (a) 106 (a) 107 (a) 108 (a) 109 (a) 110 (a) 111 (a) 112 (a) 113 (a) 114 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Ocean View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nighttime security. 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

Sunset View Terraces. Luxury 2BR & 1BTH Apts w/private balcony & beautiful view. Rooms w/ A/C & Fully Furnished. Back-up Generator. Free Wi-Fi. Laundry Area. Nighttime security. 235-6527/28 or 285-1317.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Right behind NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Special rates for NMC faculty/students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

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Contact Person:
Anemary Yoshida
Tel.: 285-3260

Neilani Rangamar Cruz
P.O. Box 501561 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
Cellphone No. 989-7474

Pro Se Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re Guardianship : FCD-GU
of ANA RANGAMAR : NO. 11-0568
CRUZ, :
by : NOTICE OF
Neilani Rangamar : HEARING
Cruz, :
Petitioner. :
:

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

You are hereby notified that Neilani Rangamar Cruz has filed a petition to be appointed as guardian for Ana Rangamar Cruz pursuant to Rule 27 of the Commonwealth Rules of Probate Procedure. This matter is set for hearing on the 29th day of December, 2011 at 9:30am at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Saipan.

Dated this 16th day of December, 2011.

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

PREPARED BY:
MARIANAS OFFICE – MLSC

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547
FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

CITY TRUST BANK } **CIVIL**
Plaintiff, } **ACTION**
-v- } **NO.**
DANIEL JOSEPH M. CABRERA } **06-0054**
and MAGDALENA S. CABRERA } **SEVENTH**
Defendants. } **AMENDED**
} **NOTICE**
} **OF SALE**


NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on September 19, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: (a) Lot No. 005 1 180, situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 005 1 02, the original of which was recorded March 11, 1983, as Document No. 16707, at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan; and (b) Tract No. 225840-1-1, located in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as more particularly described on DLS Check No. 2119/92, deeded to Daniel Muna Cabrera on August 24, 1998, and recorded as File No. 99-2096 on September 3, 1999.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, December 30, 2011, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 14th day of November, 2011:

/s/ MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer



Northern Marianas Humanities Council
Navigating the Human Experience

Vacancy Announcement

Program Officer
Northern Marianas Humanities Council

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council (Council) is soliciting applications for the position of Program Officer. The Program Officer is responsible for developing and implementing a variety of humanities programs and events and coordinating the Council's Community Grants program under the supervision of the Council's executive director and board of directors. A detailed description of the Program Officer's duties may be obtained from the Council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai or from the Council's website at www.nmihumanities.org.

Applicants for this position must possess: (1). strong analytic, writing and communication skills; (2). knowledge of grants writing and grants administration; (3). the ability to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds; (4). a working knowledge of NMI history and of current political, social and economic issues confronting the local community; (5). basic computer skills including knowledge of MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint; and (6). the ability to articulate the Council's mission to a wide range of audiences.

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) in a humanities discipline from an accredited postsecondary institution. The salary range is from \$35,000 to \$40,000 depending on qualifications and experience. Benefits are set forth in the NMICH Personnel Policy Manual.

Interested individuals are invited to send an application package including: (1). letter of interest; (2). detailed résumé; (3). a writing sample (500-800 words on a humanities topic of your choice); and (4). the names and addresses of three references to Scott Russell, Executive Director, Northern Marianas Humanities Council, Box 506407, Saipan, MP 96950. Complete application packages must be received by Council staff on or before 4:00 p.m. on Monday, January 9, 2012. For more information about this employment opportunity please contact Council staff at 235-4785.

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JAYVEE VALLEJERA
Saipan Tribune

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49ers beat Big Ben, Steelers, 20-3



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) gets sacked by San Francisco 49ers linebacker Aldon Smith (99) and Ray McDonald (not seen) in the fourth quarter of an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers in San Francisco, Monday, Dec. 19, 2011. AP



SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Monday Night Football nearly became a Monday Night Fiasco.

San Francisco's lights-out return to prime time helped salvage what could have been an embarrassing evening for everyone involved on the NFL's biggest stage after a pair of power outages delayed the game for close to 35 minutes in all.

The 49ers rode their top-ranked run defense once again to beat ailing Pittsburgh quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and the Steelers 20-3 on Monday night.

Vernon Davis caught a 1-yard touchdown pass for the 49ers (11-3) one play after setting himself up with a 21-yard reception from Alex Smith, Frank Gore ran for a 5-yard score and David Akers kicked field goals of 22 and 38 yards to overtake Hall of Famer Jerry Rice for San Francisco's single-season scoring record.

"I think we showed the world we can play the game of football on a national stage," Davis said. "At the end of the day that's what it's all about: respect."

The Steelers (10-4) missed a key chance to take sole possession of first place in the AFC North and gain the AFC's No. 1 playoff seed.

Roethlisberger, playing on a sprained left ankle that had Big Ben in a walking boot during the week, threw two early interceptions and another in the waning minutes.

Even all those Terrible Towel-waving Steelers supporters couldn't will their team when San Francisco's unique home-field advantage became two blackout delays.

"We allowed them to put drives together," Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "We better lick our wounds pretty quickly because we have a quick turnaround here."

San Francisco became the first team in NFL history to hold an opponent without a rushing touchdown through each of the first 14 games.

"I also want to recognize our defense," 49ers coach Jim Harbaugh said. "NFL record for not allowing a rushing touchdown in 14 games. I think that is huge."

Carlos Rogers, Dashon Goldson and Tarell Brown made interceptions, while Rookie of the Year candidate Aldon Smith had 2 1/2 sacks for San Francisco's stingy defense.

The 49ers also have gone 36 games without allowing a 100-yard rusher. Rashard Mendenhall had 15 carries for 64 yards.

"This team has really become a team," Harbaugh said. "I'm really proud of them for that."

Roethlisberger still finished 25 for 44 for 330 yards, but was sacked three times. After his second pick, he fumed as he limped off the field and could be seen yelling into his chin strap.

The 49ers made a big statement in their most meaningful home game since their last trip to the playoffs in January 2003, when San Francisco came from behind to stun the New York Giants 39-38 in one of the greatest comebacks in NFL history.

They had to wait 20 minutes to get started after the power went out the first time. It didn't seem to faze San Francisco.

"It wasn't too bad. It was unusual," Smith said. "You don't expect to have to deal with it, and it happened twice. But it was the same for both teams."

Smith wasn't sacked after being taken down 18 times in the previous three games, including nine in the Niners' prime time flop at Baltimore on Thanksgiving night against Jim Harbaugh's big brother, John.

Jim Harbaugh prepared for the Steelers by comparing notes with his brother

after the Ravens won both meetings this season with Pittsburgh in one of the AFC's fiercest rivalries.

The Steelers are 0-for-Harbaugh this year.

"I think we need to acknowledge that was 49er football tonight," Tomlin said. "We played the game on their terms."

The 37-year-old Akers, who long admired Rice from afar growing up in Kentucky, topped Rice's 138 points scored in 1987.

Yet Akers has said he doesn't feel deserving of the points mark over a great such as Rice - who clowned around on the field before the game catching passes from fellow Hall of Famer and former QB Steve Young, including one in the end zone.

It was after Akers' second field goal when everything went dark for a second time. Thousands of flashbulbs went off in the midst of the black, with a sellout crowd of 69,732 sitting in darkness—including all those Steelers fans who travel the country with their team.

NFL security chief Jeff Miller said he witnessed a transformer blow up while he was monitoring a gate outside the stadium, where a shooting during the preseason already put a negative light on this venue.

The second delay came early in the second quarter and halted the game again between the playoff-bound teams for about 15 minutes. Miller and other NFL officials gathered in the press box to assess the situation, remaining in constant contact with the commissioner's office.

This was the 49ers' only Monday Night game this season and their final regular-season home game at Candlestick Park. The NFL certainly will want to make sure there are no problems when San Francisco hosts a home

playoff game next month as NFC West champions—and Miller said he remains confident Candlestick can capably host a playoff game.

"Never in my life have I been a part of a blackout in a stadium," Davis said.

The Steelers missed linebacker James Harrison, who served his one-game suspension for a helmet to face-mask hit on Browns quarterback Colt

McCoy on Dec. 8.

This marked the fourth time in Monday Night Football history that two teams faced off with 10 victories and a winning percentage of at least .750 - and San Francisco has played in all of them, the last on Dec. 15, 1997, with the 12-2 49ers vs. 11-3 Broncos.

The 49ers lost left tackle Joe Staley to a second-half leg injury.

Browns' McCoy not cleared, season uncertain

BEREA, Ohio (AP)—Colt McCoy has improved from his concussion. However, his status for this week, the rest of the season—and beyond—remains blurred.

Browns coach Pat Shurmur said Monday that McCoy has not been medically cleared to practice or play. No decision has been made on who will start at quarterback Saturday when Cleveland visits the Baltimore Ravens.

McCoy suffered a concussion on Dec. 8 when he was blasted on an illegal helmet-to-face mask hit by Pittsburgh linebacker James Harrison, who was suspended for the Steelers' game in San Francisco as punishment for the devastating shot.

Seneca Wallace started in McCoy's place Sunday at Arizona, and the veteran backup had some nice moments while passing for 226 yards and a touchdown in the Browns' 20-17 overtime loss.

Shurmur said McCoy was "improving and getting better" but avoided any QB controversy—for the moment—by saying it's too early to know if McCoy will be healthy enough to practice or face the Ravens.

"I'm going to cross that bridge when they're both healthy," he said. "Right now, until Colt's healthy, we're going to go with Seneca."

But what if Colt is cleared, will he start?

"If Colt is OK, when Colt's OK, we'll talk about that," Shurmur said, playfully dodging a series of questions on the touchy subject. "How's that? Good answer?"

It's the only answer for now, but things could change if McCoy passes his baseline concussion test, is allowed to resume practicing and wants to finish the season.

McCoy's concussion and the Browns' handling of his head injury brought the team under intense scrutiny last week. Both the NFL and NFL Players Association sent medical personnel to meet with the team to discuss the treatment of McCoy, who was never given the standard concussion test while he was on the sideline and returned to the game after sitting out just two plays.

The explanation given by Browns President Mike Holmgren for the lack of testing was because McCoy did not display concussion symptoms until after the game, and the team's medical staff did not see the Harrison hit because trainers and doctors were attending other injured players.

The league and union have discussed changes to their policy on concussions based on McCoy's case, which exposed some gray areas previously overlooked.

"We are in the process of discussing next steps," league spokesman

Greg Aiello said in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

Commissioner Roger Goodell told CBS he has taken part in several conference calls with the Browns "to make sure that our processes will protect from that happening again and anything else where a player is injured and should get proper care."

"One of the things that we want to do is make sure someone, a medical professional, has his eyes on the field at all times and can see when an injury occurs to somebody so the proper medical care is being given," Goodell said.

The NFLPA has not filed a grievance against the Browns.

McCoy stayed behind in Cleveland while the team traveled to Arizona, but Shurmur said the Browns remained in contact with the 25-year-old QB over the weekend. McCoy was sent home four times last week as he continued to experience headaches from Harrison's hit.

If McCoy has any lingering symptoms and is not well enough to practice, Shurmur's decision on a starter will be made for him. However, if McCoy is cleared, then things could get tricky for the Browns, who might be reluctant to put him out there against Baltimore's rugged defense on Christmas Eve.

The Browns have been rocked by concussions, with wide receiver Jordan Norwood and backup linebacker Ben Jacobs the latest to go down with head injuries sustained Sunday. Cleveland has had at least 11 reported concussions this season. Starting tight end Benjamin Watson was placed on injured reserve last week after suffering his third concussion since July.

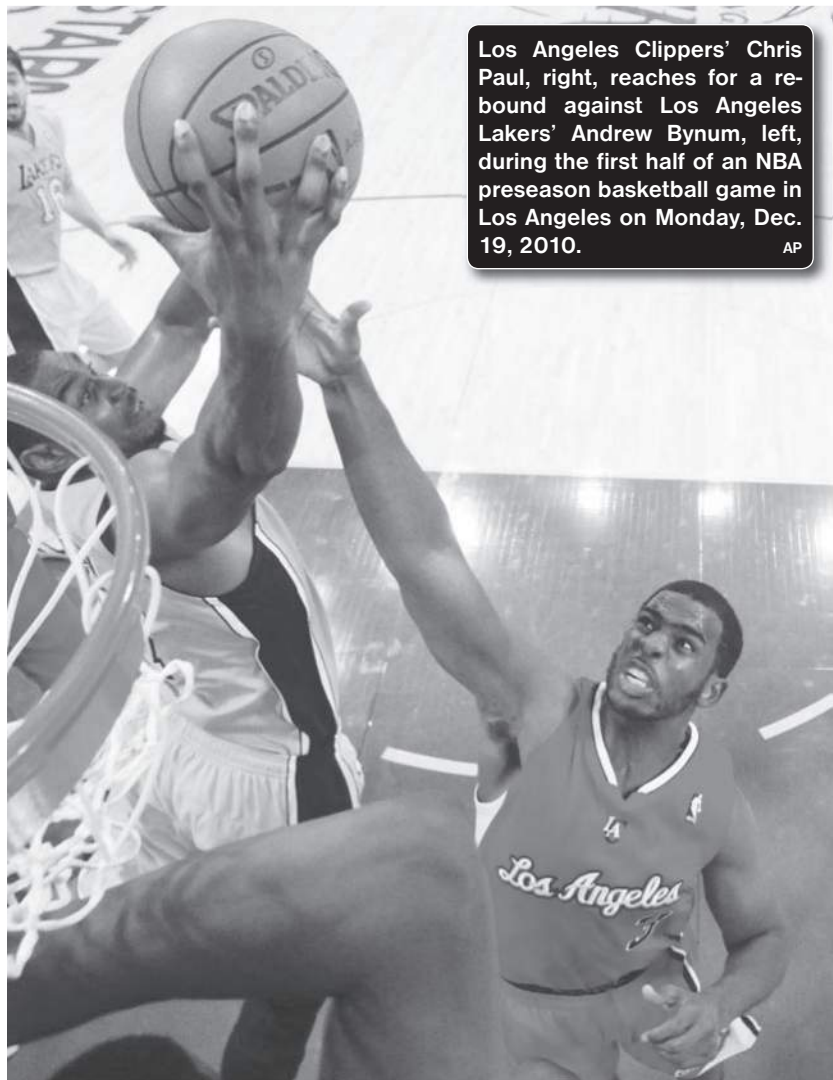
McCoy's injury may complicate the Browns' evaluation of him. The second-year QB has had an inconsistent season, but he has also been hampered by injuries, dropped passes and the club's overall lack of playmakers. Shurmur, Holmgren and general manager Tom Heckert may have seen enough to assess McCoy, who has gone 0-8 against division opponents.

Wallace seemed to spark the Browns, who carried a 17-7 lead into the fourth quarter before crumbling and clinching their eighth double-digit loss season in the past nine years. It was the third time this season Cleveland has failed to win after leading by 10 in the second half.

Shurmur, who was complimentary of Wallace, was asked if the nine-year vet made the Browns' offense better.

"I don't know about him in there compared to Colt," he said. "I'm constantly evaluating our players as we try to put together a plan to win games. There were some guys who probably showed up and flashed a little better than they have in the last couple weeks."

Clippers open preseason with win vs Lakers



Los Angeles Clippers' Chris Paul, right, reaches for a rebound against Los Angeles Lakers' Andrew Bynum, left, during the first half of an NBA preseason basketball game in Los Angeles on Monday, Dec. 19, 2010. AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Chris Paul had 17 points, nine assists and seven rebounds in his Los Angeles Clippers debut and Chauncey Billups made an equally impressive first impression with his new club, scoring 23 points in a 114-95 victory

over the Lakers on Monday night.

The first of two preseason games between the teams followed a dizzying two-week media frenzy in both camps, during which time the Clippers acquired Paul from New Orleans right after the league squashed a proposed three-way deal that would have sent

him to the Lakers.

Paul's arrival came immediately after the Clippers' acquisitions of former Laker Caron Butler as a free agent, and Billups from the New York Knicks in a waiver auction. Lamar Odom, whom the Lakers tried to peddle to New Orleans in the squashed deal, angrily demanded to be traded and was sent to the defending champion Dallas Mavericks—who swept the Lakers out of the playoffs last spring. And to top it all off, Kobe Bryant's wife Vanessa filed for divorce on Friday.

Blake Griffin had 12 points for the Clippers in a foul-plagued 25 minutes. Last season's rookie of the year picked up his third foul with 5:44 left in the second quarter, then received a technical foul about 2 minutes later for hang-

ing on the rim too long after converting Billups' pass to him off the glass into a fast-break slam dunk.

Bryant had 22 points in about 30 minutes, Pau Gasol scored 16 and Andrew Bynum added 15 points and 12 rebounds.

Rookie point guard Darius Morris, a second-round draft pick out of Michigan and the first player off the Lakers' bench, beat the first-quarter buzzer with a 20-footer that tied the score at 28. He pulled them even again at 35 with a 3-pointer and finished with 11 points in about 24 minutes.

Bryant was sent crashing to the floor by Clippers center DeAndre Jordan on a blocked layup with 7:23 left in the third quarter and came up holding his right wrist—the one he shoots with. He

stayed in the game for another 3 minutes, then went to the bench for a good stretch after the Clippers extended an eight-point lead to 80-62 on Billups' 3-pointer with 4:08 left in the period.

Paul and Billups sat out the fourth quarter. Mo Williams, beginning his first full season with the Clippers after joining them in last season at the trading deadline for Baron Davis, had nine points in 22 minutes on his 29th birthday.

Billups had 12 points as the Clippers led 55-50 at halftime.

Steve Blake started at point guard for new Lakers coach Mike Brown in place of Derek Fisher, who continued his conditioning program following weeks of inactivity while representing the players' association during the 149-day lockout.

Kings void contract of Hayes after failed physical

SACRAMENTO—The Sacramento Kings voided Chuck Hayes' \$21.3 million, four-year contract Monday, saying the forward-center failed a team physical that forced his release.

Kings general manager Geoff Petrie said in a statement Monday that informing Hayes his deal had been voided was "one of the most heartbreaking moments of my professional or personal life." He said Hayes asked the team to refrain from any further comment.

The team announced last week that a heart exam on the new Kings big man showed an abnormality that would require further testing. That came days after the former Houston Rockets forward-center signed a contract with Sacramento.

Hayes, now 28, averaged 3.4 points and 4.7 rebounds in 17 minutes per game in six seasons with the Rockets. He attended Sacramento's media day

Thursday and appeared fine, joking around with several teammates, but was held out of the team's preseason opener at Golden State on Saturday night.

Hayes' situation is the second time in the last week that a medical exam on an NBA player revealed cause for concern.

Boston Celtics forward Jeff Green will have surgery to repair an aortic aneurysm and will miss the entire season. Green was scheduled for an operation on Monday at the Cleveland Clinic. Doctors told him the operation "should completely repair Green's condition and that he can expect to resume his NBA career next season," the Celtics said in a news release Saturday.

An aortic aneurysm, which is more common in older people, is a ballooning of the wall of the aorta, the major artery that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body. A person may show no symptoms from the aneu-

rysm; but if it ruptures, it is likely to be fatal if not repaired immediately.

Specifics of Hayes' condition have not been released.

The Kings only announced last week that a stress echocardiogram test revealed an abnormality. A call and email seeking comment from Hayes' agent, Calvin Andrews, were not immediately returned.

Hayes' release leaves a void in Sacramento's starting lineup and opens the possibility of a return by Samuel Dalembert, a free agent center who played with the Kings last season. Dalembert averaged 5.1 points and 4.9 rebounds in 17 minutes per game last season.

Sacramento hosts its second and final preseason game Tuesday night against the Warriors. The Los Angeles Lakers visit Sacramento for the Kings' regular-season opener Dec. 26.

NBA BRIEFS

Wizards re-sign Young for one year

WASHINGTON (AP)—Free agent Nick Young has signed a one-year contract to return to the Washington Wizards. The shooting guard led Washington in scoring last season with a career-high 17.4 points per game, more than doubling the 8.6 he averaged in the 2009-10 season. His NBA career average is 10.9 points since being drafted in the first round by the Wizards in 2007. Young's new contract was announced Monday, a day before Washington's second and last exhibition game, at the Philadelphia 76ers. In the Wizards' preseason opener, they had all sorts of problems on offense, making only 33 percent of their shots in a 103-78 loss to Philadelphia. Washington opens the regular season Dec. 26 at home against the New Jersey Nets.

Blazers owner Allen has no plans of selling team

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Paul Allen was emphatic: He's not selling the Portland Trail Blazers. In a rare and wide-ranging discussion with reporters on Monday night, the billionaire owner shot down recent talk that he wants to put the Blazers on the market in the near future. "I have no plans to sell the team," he declared. Allen would not, however, say how long he expects to keep the Blazers. He says numerous factors would play into that decision, including his health. The co-founder of Microsoft was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and underwent chemotherapy in 2009, but was de-

clared cancer-free late last year. Allen was optimistic that the NBA's new labor agreement would help smaller-market teams like his that have been losing money. He corrected one reporter about his losses saying they were in the "hundreds of millions, let's be clear." The labor deal, ratified by players and owners on Dec. 8, ended a 161-day lockout. It included several owner-friendly provisions, like expanded revenue sharing, a 12 percent reduction in players' salaries, and a limit on certain contracts.

Former All-Star Peja Stojakovic to Retire After 13 NBA Seasons

Dallas Mavericks forward Peja Stojakovic has elected to retire after 13 NBA seasons, according to ESPN.com. Stojakovic, 34, decided that it was time to step away from the game after helping the Mavericks claim the NBA title last season. It was Stojakovic's first and only NBA Championship. "When you start competing against your body more than you're preparing for the actual game," Stojakovic told ESPN.com, "it's a wakeup call." The three-time All-Star's best years came as a member of the Sacramento Kings in the late 1990's and early 2000's. In 2003-04, Stojakovic had his most productive year offensively, averaging 24.2 points per game while shooting 43 percent from the three-point line. Over the course of his 13-year-career he averaged 17 points and 4.7 rebounds per game while shooting over 40 percent from three-point-range. (ESPN)

Texas Rangers win negotiating rights to Yu Darvish



NEW YORK (AP)—The Texas Rangers have submitted the winning bid for Yu Darvish, earning the right to negotiate a contract with the Japanese pitcher.

Major League Baseball announced Monday night that the Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters of Japan's Pacific League informed the U.S. commissioner's office that they have accepted the top bid for Darvish.

The Rangers, who have won the past two AL pennants, now have 30 days to sign Darvish to a contract. The 25-year-old right-hander is considered the best pitcher in Japan and several of base-

ball's biggest spenders were thought to be interested in him.

"The Texas Rangers are pleased and excited to have acquired the rights to negotiate with Yu Darvish. Our organization has scouted Mr. Darvish for the last several years and has been very impressed with his abilities and accomplishments. We believe he would be a great addition to the Texas Rangers pitching staff," the Rangers said in a statement. "We look forward to beginning the next step of this process in the very near future with Mr. Darvish and his representatives."

Bidding for the posting fee closed last Wednesday, and the Ham Fighters

had until 5 p.m. EST on Tuesday to accept. The posting fee will be paid only if an agreement is reached with Darvish's agents, Arn Tellem and Don Nomura.

"We were pleased to learn that the Texas Rangers were the high bidders for Yu Darvish," Tellem said in a statement. "The Rangers are an extraordinary franchise in an exceptional city with equally exceptional fans. Yu is honored to be prized so highly and recognized as a once-in-a-generation pitcher. We look forward to getting negotiations under way."

The 6-foot-5 Darvish was 18-6 with a 1.44 ERA and a league-leading 276 strikeouts last season.

Masters field already has over 90 players



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (AP)—Ernie Els and Retief Goosen enter the 2012 season without any assurances of playing in the Masters.

The field for the Masters took shape Monday after the final official week of golf tournaments around the world. Among the criteria for an invitation is to be among the top 50 in the world ranking at the end of the season.

Els, a three-time major champion who has suffered plenty of heartaches at Augusta National, fell to No. 56 in the final ranking. Els has been eligible for the Masters every year since his debut in 1994. Goosen, a two-time U.S.

Open champion, is at No. 53.

Jim Furyk narrowly claimed a spot in the Masters, to be played April 5-8, when he finished at No. 50. Furyk began the year at No. 5 in the world.

Others who got into the Masters through the world ranking were Ian Poulter, Paul Casey, Alvaro Quiros, K.T. Kim, Simon Dyson, Sang-moon Bae, Rickie Fowler, Francesco Molinari, Miguel Angel Jimenez and Gonzalo Fernandez-Castano.

Els and Goosen still can get in by winning a PGA Tour event before the Masters (except those tournaments held opposite World Golf Championships), or by getting into the top 50 in the world ranking published the week

before the Masters.

Others who have yet to qualify include Ryo Ishikawa (No. 51), Ben Crane (No. 54), Ryan Moore (No. 57), Matteo Manassero (No. 58) and Robert Allenby (No. 59). Further down the ranking are Anthony Kim (No. 75) and Camilo Villegas (No. 89).

The field for the 77th Masters is at least 91 players, depending on how many former champions choose to compete. The Masters has the smallest field of the four majors, and the club prefers that no more than 100 players tee it up.

A year ago, the field going into the new season also was at 91 players, and there were 99 players in the final field. The last time the Masters field topped 100 players was in 1966, when there were 103 competitors.

MDX sweeps regular season

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



MDX finished their regular season in the 2011 DLX Basketball Invitational Friendship League with a perfect record, following an 84-63 rout of Sherwin Williams last Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

MDX completed the round-robin elimination with a flawless 8-0 mark, while Sherwin Williams dropped to a 3-3 record with two games left in the regular season. The immaculate record secured MDX the No. 1 seed in the single-elimination playoffs, while Sherwin Williams is also assured of a slot to the next round despite falling to the No. 5 spot. Only the Top 8 teams in the nine-team field will

make it to the playoff round.

With Sherwin Williams missing key players Jun Estolas, Jawn Joyner, and Elgene Mangali, who were playing in another league at the same night, MDX had no problem cruising to its eighth win in as many games.

MDX jumped to a 16-4 advantage after 10 minutes of play with all its starters making it to the scoreboard, while only Chuck Deleon Guerrero and

Victor Mallari scored for Sherwin Williams.

Sherwin Williams never recovered from thereon, as it clearly missed the contributions of its three scorers. MDX retained the double-digit margin in the next three quarters behind its balance scoring.

Four MDX players went on to finish the game in double figures. Alex Lauron fired 16, Erlan Lansang added 15, and

Zack Diaz and Dexter Tenorio chipped in 14 and 10, respectively. Only Jerome Reyes and Victor Mallaria tallied double digits for Sherwin Williams with 24 and 18, respectively, and the rest of their teammates combined for only 12 markers.

8th Division 84, Pacific Postal 55

8th Division finished the regular season with a 3-5 record after beating Pacific Postal.

8th Division is now in the playoffs, while Pacific Postal is in danger of elimination with its winless 0-6 card. Pacific Postal is in a tie for eighth to ninth place with FGC.

A 31-11 scoring in the third quarter allowed 8th Division to pull away and notch its third victory. 8th Division was ahead by only two at the break, 38-36, when the trio of Ric Alejandro and Matthew and Ernest Duenas teamed up in the third-quarter breakaway. Matthew Duenas scored 10 points in the juggernaut, while Alejandro and Ernest Duenas chipped in nine and seven, respectively, turning a shaky two-point lead to a

comfortable 69-47 advantage at the end of the third.

8th Division preserved the safe lead in the fourth canto with Ernest Duenas adding seven more points to finish with a game-high 24 markers, the same output Alejandro posted. Matthew Duenas logged 18. Mico Usi and Ramsa Tenepere top-scored for Pacific Postal with 14 points each.

First Game

8th Division 84 – E. Duenas 24, Alejandro 24, Mat. Duenas 18, Man. Duenas 6, Lansang 4, Detera 2.

Pacific Postal Plus 63 – M. Usi 14, Tenepere 14, Anicete 11, Claveria 10, Agbanlog 7, Acosta 5.

Scoring by quarters: 22-15, 38-36, 69-47, 84-63.

Second Game

MDX 77 – Lauron 16, Lansang 15, Diaz 14, Tenorio 10, Lisua 9, Johanes 4.

Sherwin Williams 55 – Reyes 25, Dayrit 18, Navarro 6, Mallari 4, Deleon Guerrero 2.

Scoring by quarters: 16-4, 44-20, 62-34, 77-55.

COUPLE

From Page 28

well by Toves.

Toves then managed the top position, but Pua crawled back to his feet and went for another take down.

Pua took top position and Toves appeared to play good defense until Pua lifted him up and slammed him twice.

The second slam dazed Toves, allowing Pua to finish him off with some vicious head strikes until referee Keith Nabors called it off.

The bout set the stage for Rob “The Real Deal” Wusstig (3-5), of Guam’s Countershot Mixed Martial Arts, and home bet Shane “Pikaboo” Alvarez’s title match, which the former earned a split-decision victory after a handful of exhausting five-minute rounds.

Trench Tech Purebred Promotions already proposed a rematch between Alvarez (7-1) and newly crowned feather-weight champ

In addition, Tinian’s Craig “Earthquake” Borja and Rhenz Benghit also put on a good showing on Friday night.

Zeng Zung’s Borja defeating Zalaka’s Jake “One Blow” Ilo by majority decision after three five-minute rounds in their MMA bout set at 140-lbs.

Ilo took the first round with a big takedown that sent Borja to the mat in an awkward position. Borja’s arm was caught behind him in the fall giving Ilo room to open a cut under his rival’s

left eye with some powerful elbow strikes.

Borja, however, recovered in the second round and almost caught Ilo in a rear-naked choke.

The latter was too slippery to sink it in so Borja dealt out some punishing ground-and-pound strikes to the face.

Then both fighters stood and banded in the final round, making it very difficult on the judges.

It was non-stop action in the last three minutes as both fighters wanted it bad, but perhaps an all out football tackle by Borja in the last 10 seconds may have made the difference.

Team Relentless’s Benghit bested Zalaka’s John Ilo by unanimous decision in their K-1 kickboxing exhibition set at 145lbs.

This match may have been listed as an exhibition, but turned out to be one of the most exciting parings of the night.

Both got in some nice shots early and both fell to the canvas, albeit briefly. It was pretty well even in the opening three minutes as Ilo held the reach advantage, but Benghit was bobbing and weaving in his own respect.

While both mixed it up well, Benghit took round two using his left hand with some nice footwork and was credited with a knock down.

Then they gave each other hell for the first half of the final round, making yet another tough call by the judges.

Some other Trench Tech winners included Mark “The Dark”

Nuique (6-0) and Martin “Ning-Bo Slice” Cepeda (5-2).

Nuique toppled Predator Combat’s “Tabi” Jay Muna at 2:58 of the second round due to strikes from the mount position.

Nuique returned to the octagon in true form after taking a year off.

He waited patiently for his opportunities and improved his unbeaten streak to six in a row.

Muna was eventually mounted and saved by the bell in Round 1, but was not so fortunate the second time around.

While Nuique held about a 5-lb weight advantage, he still displayed superior wrestling skills in the fight and cleanly mounted Muna in both rounds with Nabors calling it just before the end of round two.

Cepeda earned a unanimous decision victory over Guam newcomer Keith Corpuz, of Countershot, in their bout set at 190 lbs.

Being by far the more experienced fighter, Cepeda did a good job cutting Corpus off in the cage and his wrestling and grappling skills showed through in the match, however, props to Corpus for going the distance.

Cepeda tried to finish the fight about three different ways as he dominated all three rounds, but his rookie opponent had nothing to hang his head about.

Meanwhile Guam’s Josh The Hedgehog” Alvarez (9-4), of Countershot, and Spike 22’s Jared “The Haole Horror” Melon also notched wins in their parings.

Josh Alvarez defeated Trench

diac in the semifinals.

The tournament in Gisborne was Rastguiy’s second since traveling to New Zealand early this month. Two weeks ago, she joined the U12 singles competition of the 2011 Waikato Christmas Junior Open in Hamilton and marched into the semifinals. She also entered the doubles event with the Solomon Islands’

5:47.72 in the same event on April 26, 2002.

“She broke CNMI record only once, but Miku is still 9 years old and just started swimming in the summer of 2010, so her improvement is really fast. She will break more records in the future. Her time in the 200m freestyle and 50m butterfly are just about a second behind the CNMI age group marks,” Hiro Kimura said.

Vinda Teally and the duo barged into the quarterfinals.

Rastguiy is in New Zealand as a member of the Pacific Oceania Touring Team. Her last stop will be Auckland where she will participate in the 2011 Auckland Christmas Tournament, which runs from Dec. 18 to 23 at the Scarbro Tennis Centre.

Overall, Kimura said Tsunami Saipan swimmers did well in the series and thanked his wards for showing up on time and completing the events.

“Almost everyone showed up on time at the pool and started warming up. That was very important because if there are the no warm-ups, you can never expect a good performance from the swimmers,” he said.

PROA

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necessary, taking place at 7pm on Monday, Dec. 26.

Proa worked out to an early 19-15 edge in the opening 10 minutes of Monday’s curtain raiser, connecting with a couple of 3-pointers out of the gate.

Proa’s Joe Villacrusis sank one of them and tallied seven markers in the first quarter, which was complimented by a late five-point string from teammate Marvin Rabauliman.

Proa then trudged ahead, 52-32, at halftime, sinking four more three-balls in the second quarter, one of which by Keoni Chariton who went on to score 11 in the period.

Mobil tried to mount a comeback after the break, but still trailed, 50-76, heading into the final canto.

Mobil’s Jun Estolas delivered 11 points in both the third and fourth quarters, but Proa found its second wind in the final period and ran away with it in the end.

It was a strong effort by Proa who boasted five players in double figures.

Pete Iguel led the group with 19 points, while Estolas finished with a game-high 28 on the short end.

Looking back, Mobil surely missed the presence of its center Larry Sharry and bench support from Juan Maratita and Ernie Moises.

In the late match, Konflikt managed an early 21-16 lead thanks to a couple of long balls in the first quarter.

FGC regrouped in the second period and knotted the count at 40-all at the halftime break.

FGC sank a couple 3-pointers and buried seven free throws in the second quarter surge.

Then FGC’s Kae Bernardo

and Lerio Pagarao teamed up for 15 checks in the third quarter to put their team in front by a basket heading into the final period, 65-63.

Rex Yabut came off the bench for FGC in the fourth quarter and delivered eight big points, while his teammates Pagarao, Jason Bahilo, and Zack Babauta converted four pressure-packed free throws in the closing minutes to secure the win.

Konflikt’s Jawn Joyner and Dave Sablan scrambled for eight points apiece in the fourth quarter, but FGC would not be denied.

FGC’s Bernardo led four other teammates in double figures with 26, while Joyner turned in a team-high 22 in Konflikt’s final stand.

Notably, Konflikt mainstays Elmer Esdrelon, Bruce Berline, and Wowie Abuel were contained to an uncharacteristic 14 points combined in the game.

Konflikt’s Ivan DeVero managed 17 points, but both he and Esdrelon fouled out in the match.

First Game

Proa 96 – Iguel 19, Rabauliman 18, Chariton 15, Lizama 14, Barcinas 11, Villacrusis 9, Sablan 8, Mendiola 2.

Mobil 73 – Estolas 28, Lizama 15, Ruloked 13, Fernando 8, De Guzman 4, Factor 4, Gapor 1.

Scoring by quarters: 19-14, 52-32, 70-56, 96-73.

Second Game

FGC 94 – Bernardo 26, Pagarao 19, Bahillo 14, Yabut 13, Lerio 10, Babauta 6, Basila 4, David 2.

Konflikt-IT&E 87 – Joyner 22, DeVero 17, Sablan 16, Abuel 8, Barrios 4, Esdrelon 4, Metran 4, Tamayo 4, Capalad 3, Berline 2.

Scoring by quarters: 16-21, 40-40, 65-63, 94-87.

RASTGUIY

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third in the 11-team field and had bye in the first round. In the second round, they battled Chene and Mullan Kamoe in three hard-fought set before losing. Chene and Kamoa took the opening set, 6-2, but Rast-

guiy and Coffin recovered big time in the second set with an impressive 6-0 triumph. In the deciding third set, Rastguiy and Coffin ran out of steam and bowed to their unseeded foes, 3-10.

Rastguiy and Coffin dropped to the loser’s bracket and were scheduled to meet siblings Hanan and Najat Chi-

As for Tammy, she became only the second CNMI female swimmer (the first one was Angel Marie Tan) to make it into the record books for the past three years. The 9-year-old swimmer graced the CNMI record books for the first time after timing in at 5:43.69 in the girls 9 to 10 400m freestyle race, four seconds faster than previous record-holder Amanda Johnson, who logged

TSUNAMI

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the final series, he reset two more CNMI age group marks (50m freestyle/33.65 seconds and 200m freestyle/ 2:45.35).

“Ryuto’s 50m freestyle record is faster than Guam’s. His time is closer to the Junior Olympics,” the Tsunami Saipan mentor said.

2011 FA Challenge Cup Finals

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Members of MP United U18 and their coach Brad Ruszala, standing second from right, pose with the championship photo during the awards ceremony for the 2011 FA Challenge Cup last Sunday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.



MP United Silver players and coach Norman Del Rosario, kneeling right, pose with their U15 league championship trophy.



MP United Silver and MP United U18 (blue uniforms) players shake hands after the championship match.



MP United Silver players huddle before the start of the second half of their game against MP United U18.



MP United U18's Dae Min Jeon falls after colliding against MP United Silver's Andrew Johnson.



MP United Silver's Kennedy Izuka, second left, hits the ball.



MP United Silver's Jehn Joyner, right, goes for a kick against MP United U18's Moon Bin Hong.



MP United U18's Chris Camacho, left, congratulates teammate Yi Shan Wang, who scored his second goal in the second half.



MP United Silver's Angelo Jones, left, chases MP United U18's Nam Ki Kim.



MP United Silver's Dakota Hall, right, battles MP United U18's Clay McCullough-Stearns in a footrace.



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Proa, FGC arrange finals clash

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

FGC advanced to the finals of the Garapan Basketball League-IT&E Cup after stunning erstwhile undefeated pennant champion Konflikt-IT&E, 94-87, Monday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

FGC will meet second-ranked Proa in Garapan tonight at 7pm. Proa wore down Mobil, 96-73, in the first semifinal pairing. Notably, Mobil advanced to the semifinals after upsetting Blue Haus-Satbahi, 73-67, last Sunday night.

In addition, the regular season awards will be presented during halftime of tonight's match.

Game 2 is slated for 7pm on Friday with Game 3, if

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Proa's Jack Lizama soars to the hoop for a finger roll in Monday's GBL-IT&E Cup semifinals match against Mobil at the Garapan Basketball Court.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND



Rastguiy reaches finals of New Zealand event

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



CNMI bet Negahr Rastguiy made it to the finals of the 2010 Poverty Bay East Coast Junior Open in Gisborne, New Zealand, last week.

Rastguiy, who topped the U12 singles division of the same tournament last year, moved up to the girls U14 this year and won her first three matches at the Gisborne Tennis Club to advance to the championship game before losing to top-ranked Sarah Knighton, 1-6, 2-6.

The 12-year-old netter was seeded second in the 32-player draw and drew a bye in the first round. In the second round, Rastguiy defeated Al Soo and then won anew against Kiana Sword-Tua (scores were not posted) in the quarterfinals. With her twin victories, Rastguiy marched into the semifinals where she was paired against Kelani Chene. The Commonwealth netter then swept Chene, 6-4, 6-2, to set up a finals duel against Knighton, who beat Mishaela Bonin, 6-0, 6-1, in the other semis pairing.

Rastguiy was also entered in the girls U14 doubles and teamed up with Ruby Coffin. The duo was seeded

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Rastguiy

3 Tsunami Saipan swimmers stand out

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Three Tsunami Saipan swimmers made notable performances during the four legs of the Tsunami Swim Circuit Series.

"In the series, the most outstanding swimmers are Lukas Kang, Ryuto Yanai, and Miku Tammy," Tsunami Saipan head coach Hiro Kimura said.

Eight-year-old Kang either reset or post new records in the boys U8 age group in each of the four legs of the competition. In Series 1, Kang's 1:23.74 in the 100m backstroke event crushed the 1:26.54 he submitted on Feb. 5, 2011. Then in the 50m free-

style, Kang's 34.33 seconds surpassed the 36.18 seconds mark of Yanai (April 16, 2011).

In the Series 2, Kang reset two more age group marks (100m butterfly/1:22.63) and 50m breaststroke/45.75 seconds) and shattered three more (400m freestyle /5:34.00, 100m breaststroke/1:38.22, and 50m backstroke/39.24 seconds) in the penultimate leg. Then in the last leg,

Kang was still on top of his race, eclipsing one more CNMI age group record (200m individual medley/2:58.63).

"Lukas did not only update a lot of CNMI age group records, but also marked very high level result. All of his records are much faster than

Guam marks. His times are so close to the qualify time of Junior Olympics in Japan. The Junior Olympics is the highest-level swim meet for junior swimmers in the world. Even in Korea, his records may have ranked in the Top 10," Kimura said.

Yanai broke records (boys U8) in all three of the four legs of the series. In Series 1, Yanai clocked in at 1:16.11 in the 100m freestyle, surpassing the 1:17.64 he posted early this year, and then tallied 33.85 seconds to eclipse the 36.18 seconds he recorded on April 16, 2011. In the Series 3, Yanai turned in 5:42.13 400m freestyle to better the previous mark of 6:09.43 Kensuke Kimura made on Feb. 25, 2005 and in

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Kang



Tammy



Yanai

A couple of notable call outs in Trench Warz 15



WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND

Marianas Elite's Vince Pua, center, is expected to take on Guam's Ricky Camp of Spike 22 after the latter observed the young up-and-coming fighter's performance in Trench Warz 15: Supremacy held last Friday at the Saipan World Resort. Looking on are referee Keith Nabors, right, and announcer L.J. Castro.

By WALTER CEPEDA-SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Marianas Elite's Vince Pua was called out by Guam's Ricky Camp after the former's 140-lb catch-weight bout against Camp's stablemate Ryan Toves during Trench Warz 15: Supremacy last Friday at the Saipan World Resort.

Lights Out Gym' Camp (2-0) was

Toves' cornerman that night and as passions flared in the aftermath, he challenged Pua to a bout at 145 lbs in the next Trench Tech event.

Still unbeaten in four tries, Pua put on yet another impressive display, recording a technical knockout victory over Toves at 2:47 of the first round.

Pua went for a takedown right out of the gate, but was stuffed pretty

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